ARTHUR HOLNESS

# CHRISTIANITY

AND

# THE WORKING CLASSES

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London
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1906

*First Edition February* 1906
*Reprinted October* 1906

THE GENERAL CONCLUSION IS THAT THE GREAT MASSES OF THE PEOPLE REMAIN APART FROM ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNION.—*CHARLES BOOTH.*

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AMONG THE WORKING CLASSES, ONLY ONE QUALITY OF RELIGION REMAINS, AND THAT IS RESPECT AND REVERENCE FOR JESUS CHRIST. . . . THE DIVINITY ASSIGNED TO HIM BY THE THEOLOGIANS IS A SUBJECT FOR SMILES; . . . BUT THEY ALL STAND REVERENTLY AND QUIET BEFORE HIS GREAT PERSONALITY.—*GÖHRE.*

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THE TALK OF THE CHURCHES IS FOR THE MOST PART AS UNINTELLIGIBLE AS HEBREW TO THE MODERN HAND-WORKER; BUT IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS HE SEEMS TO HEAR THE WELCOME ACCENTS OF A FAMILIAR TONGUE. A COMMON REVERENCE MAY BEGET A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER AND THE SOCIAL REFORMER MAY PERHAPS MEET EACH OTHER AS THEY BOTH APPROACH THE SIMPLICITY WHICH IS IN CHRIST.—*PROFESSOR F. G. PEABODY.*

# CONTRIBUTORS

# INTRODUCTION

By George Haw

In a previous work[1] some of us discussed the religious doubts and denials which find a free expression among work-people to-day.

Now we are considering what exactly are the present-day relationships between the Churches and Labour. The aggressive Agnostic belongs more to the middle class than to the working class. We therefore leave him out of the present inquiry, and come to the question, What are work-people to-day saying about Christianity?

We know very well that many work-people are earnest members of some Church or other. The great mass, however, remain either antagonistic to modern religious teaching or indifferent to it.

[1] *The Religious Doubts of Democracy.* Macmillan. 6d.

There is no need to speculate about working-class opinion on religion. Let us listen to what work-people say themselves.

### What Work-People say about Christianity

My friend, Mr. Robert Blatchford, sent to me the other day a letter he had received from Rotherham, protesting against an article of mine in his paper the *Clarion.* I had asked, What social reformer or Labour leader has ever spoken such comfortable words to the people as Christ? The Rotherham reader replied to Mr. Blatchford:—

> It's the comfortable words of Christ and the parsons, "Resist not evil," "The poor you have always with you," and such like sayings, that suit the Gradgrinds, and keep the poor worker down and hinder social reform.
>
> If Mr. Haw will take my medicine, I will guarantee to cure him of this kind of religion in three months.
>
> My brother Jack is a coal-miner. He is a filler and trimmer. He has to fill ten tons of coal and tram it sixty yards for

4s. 6d., with a 40 per cent added to it, or for the paltry sum of 6s. 6d.

The place he has to work in is so hot and polluted with gases that a man sweats sitting down doing nothing. Brother Jack works naked as a new-born baby, except that he has a pair of socks and clogs upon his feet.

Let any one have a week or two in his place, and I dare say he will in that short time get a big enough burden on, and will most truly find out that he cannot lay it on Jesus. No doubt at the same time he would find out that the heavenly Father with His providential care had gone far far away.

It's nothing less than murder when the collier's every breath chokes and strangles with the poison in them holes of death.

In an article in the *Daily News* I said the working classes were not so much hostile to Christ as to the Churches. "Let me tell you why," wrote a workman from Newcastle the day after the article appeared. He said :—

Is it not because true, genuine Christianity

is very little preached by the clergy of to-day, and consequently not understood and practised by the great majority of the people?

Did not Christ teach that the whole essence of Christianity lay in loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind; and loving your neighbour as yourself (Matt. xxii. 37-40; Luke x. 25-28), and did He not say that the whole law and the prophets hung on that? Again, is it not a fact that in most Churches to-day the great majority of so-called "better class" people look down upon the working man, who spends his life in toiling for their necessities and luxuries, and do not associate with him as a brother?

Is not the system of commerce in Christian England (so-called) unjust and oppressive to the workers?

Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P., in an open letter to the clergy, published in the *Labour Leader* on 23rd June 1905, said:—

The Archbishop of Canterbury, writing the other day, said he had to devote seventeen hours a day to his work, and

had no time left in which to form opinions on how to solve the unemployed question. The religion which demands seventeen hours a day for organisation, and leaves no time for a single thought about starving and despairing men, women, and children, has no message for this age.

Consider now a few extracts from letters sent to me by working men in various parts of the country. They were all sent of the writers' own free will, after reading articles of mine in various papers. I need not do more than name the place from which the letters came and the calling of the writers when mentioned. I offer no comment on the letters at this stage, nor do I need to be told that some are self-contradictory and that others misrepresent the Christian position entirely. They are simply submitted as examples of what working people think of Christianity and the Churches. Coming fresh from the furnace as it were, the opinions are well worth weighing carefully.

An Irish labourer, who says he "calmly and deliberately left the Roman Church," writes :—

As moral guides, clergymen of all denominations are not better than ordinary mortals. We find them supporting wars of aggression, opposing measures of justice, harsh as rulers and magistrates.

If professional lecturers of astronomy, geology, mathematics, and medicine knew no more of the business at which they got their living than men outside those professions, we would feel it strange, and feel inclined to say they were receiving money under false pretences. Let us apply the same rule to the Churches, regardless of prejudice or traditional teaching.

Religions are the greatest means known to-day of keeping up divisions and jealousies among peoples. Education is modelled not to suit the little ones, but the prejudices of the sectarians.

Other workmen tell me they are certain of one thing, namely, that the Churches are as ignorant of God as the poor are.

Here is a post-card from a city clerk :—

The religion of Christ, depending as it

does upon the experience and intuitions of the unselfish enthusiasms, cannot possibly be accepted or understood generally by a world which tolerates a social system based upon fratricidal struggle as the condition of existence.

It is impossible that there can be any general apprehension of God as Christ saw Him, until social justice has brought in brotherly love. Man must be revealed to man as brother, before God can be revealed to him as Father.

If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?

"R" of Salford asks Christians to turn their "attention to the history of great business concerns (Manchester's, for example) founded and continued by church-goers who have accumulated wealth by means which no true followers of Christ could approve. Christians are no better than others in their treatment of their workers. Time has proved Christianity to be utterly helpless to deter people from evil-doing."

From Manchester an ex-Sunday School teacher writes:—

> Last week I ceased all active part in Church work. I cannot understand how men can reconcile the teaching and spirit of Jesus in its simplicity in the Gospels with present-day clericalism.
>
> It is hard to think that 1900 years have lapsed, yet the essential principle of Christianity (universal brotherhood), which all Churches have preached for centuries, is still mere sentiment, and, in fact, cannot be otherwise until all Churches and sects (the root of disunion) are abolished. Much could I write of the folly and hypocrisy of the members of the Churches where I have been familiar, who acted not from the want of belief but in the name of Christ; and I know they are typical of the great majority.
>
> Another Reformation looms in the distance, when the dead organism of the Churches will have been cast off as a hindrance, and men will really live together as brothers.

In the same strain writes an unknown friend at Liverpool :—

> Modern Christianity is no doubt a trump card in the hands of the wealthy classes. The doctrine of contentment is an admirable one as preached by Christ, because, as Chaucer says of his priest, "first He followed it Himself." But the duty of ordering ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters, to obey pastors and masters, to be content in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call us, coming from the people interested in keeping such a state of things going is open to misconstruction. It is man's modification of Christ's injunction, "Call no man master, for only God is your master, even your Father which is in heaven."
>
> I am not advocating a return to primitive Christianity, with its communism of goods and so on. Let the well-to-do keep all they have and get as much more as they can; only let them come out from the Church. They will by doing so be no worse citizens; they will simply drop the

name of Christian, to which they have no more right than to that of Buddhist or Mohammedan. If they were imperfect but sincere followers of the doctrine of Jesus, they would be Christians, but they offend fundamentally in violating the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

So do most of us. For that reason I gave up church-going years ago, in order at least to be consistent. As a body of men we do not love our neighbours. Instead, we compete with them; and competition is in its essence strife.

The new idea is to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness after "these things" have been added, or rather so to accommodate the two processes that they go on simultaneously—six days for one object and one for the other.

Do not let us keep such a fiction up to ourselves any longer. I say to ourselves, because the poor, I know from being with them, have more sense of humour than they are credited with.

According to a Wood Green correspondent,

"The Churches each year tend to become more and more mere machinery for the Sunday recreation of the well-fed and the well-dressed."

And now a note from Islington :—

> The abolition of slavery was opposed by Christians, and the opposition supported by Biblical quotations. The temperance movement was ridiculed by the Church, and at the present time a large number of brewery shares are held by the clergy and members of the Church of England. It was the Church that opposed the franchise, free education, free libraries, etc. etc. In fact, the Church has in its time destroyed valuable libraries, and has always been opposed to the spread of knowledge amongst the people.

A Glasgow correspondent waxes wroth over what he calls clerical Trade Unions :—

> Whatever may have caused the origin and progress of Christianity at one time, there is no doubt whatever that money is the grand cause of its existence at this moment. So long as so much money can be derived from that source, there will always be

plenty of men and women willing to preach Christ and Him crucified. Of course, we all work for money, because we cannot do without it. The vast majority of men tell us plainly that their object is money. But the clergymen and their dupes tell us in the most hypocritical style that they are actuated solely by a desire to extend the kingdom of Christ. Nevertheless, a more greedy, selfish, and miserly class of people cannot be found in this country. Any person of ordinary intelligence can easily see that their General Assemblies and Church Congresses are nothing more nor less than meetings of clerical Trade Unions.

I believe that nine-tenths of the clergymen of every denomination are "infidels." If the people were to stop the supplies, Christianity would collapse in less than a year.

This from a Birmingham Socialist:—

If Socialists are getting tired of orthodox Christianity, can it be wondered at? Can it be said that the great body of professing Christians are really trying to better

earth's conditions? Here, in England, is the result satisfactory after all these centuries of Christianity and the hundreds of thousands of pounds spent annually on clergy, churches, and chapels? To the Socialist, one of the greatest travesties is that this England of ours, after all its boasted Christianity, should need societies to protect innocent children and defenceless animals.

A lady in Burnley, who associates with working women and men in many of their organisations, says that among both sexes she finds in the northern towns that doubt and disbelief are growing. Distrust of the Church is common. Herself a Christian, she says her working-class friends assert that religion—the Church of England in particular—has opposed progress and generally been on the side of the rich and against the poor. She continues:—

> They point to the bishops and most of the clergy as robbers of the poor. By the Church most folk mean the clergy, not the laity at all. The ignorance is profound, the distortion of facts great, yet is there

not much truth in these accusations of worldliness, greed, and inefficiency?

"The great lying Church of England," said one, "has always ridden on the backs of the people."

"The Church is honeycombed with commercialism," said another.

When I attempted to show that the Church was democratic in its constitution I was derided.

"You do not know it in the North," I was told. "Go to Church in poor clothes, in clogs, and without a coin for the plate, and see how you will be treated."

After all, it is the so-called Christians, the paid servants of the Church, who have brought discredit on the name of Christ.

### Labour opposed to Church Institutionalism

The first thing that stands out in these letters is the deep distrust of the Churches. Christianity is not assailed but Christians. The teaching is rather upheld to the detriment of the teachers. Nowhere is a word breathed against Christ. The feeling seems to have been

well described by a man in the train the other day. On the mention of religion he remarked: "I don't hold with church-going people at all, but I will say this, I believe Jesus Christ was a down-right good fellow."

We see workmen looking back upon the black record of church-goers in social reform until distrust lies deep in their hearts, and out of their mouth comes condemnation and bitterness. In their own lifetime many of them have seen worshippers at Christian churches, sometimes bitterly, sometimes cruelly, opposing them in their laboured struggle of blood and tears towards light and freedom. They will tell you how parsons, church-goers, and Church organisations have opposed Factory Acts, Free Education, Poor Law Reform, Old Age Pensions, Housing Reform, Electoral Reform, Temperance Reform, and Labour Legislation directed to safeguard the lives and liberties of men, and to make the conditions of children's and women's work less burdensome and less unholy. One after another they instance the dark records which the years reveal—the shameless wrongs inflicted upon the people by those who claim to be followers of the Lord of Love—down to our

own time, when they cite the Archbishop of Canterbury describing as a regrettable necessity the Chinese Labour Ordinance in South Africa, which is only upheld by fire-arms and prostitution.

So to-day Labour feels that whatever social emancipation it has won for itself has been won not only without the Churches, but often enough in spite of the Churches. Labour has therefore become independent of their aid. Having become independent, it is now either suspicious of or indifferent to the Churches. Yet at no time have the great mass of the people ever ceased altogether to believe in Christ.

Have we then to face the strange problem of a people who, while believing in Christ, despise the modern followers of Christ? Do the people believe in Christ, but not in Christians? Has the spirit been lost in the institution?

"An intimate acquaintance with many thousands of working men has taught me," says Mr. Percy Alden, "that, even when there is no hostility whatever to religion, there is a sort of sub-conscious and unrecognised feeling of antagonism to the Church as an institution or corporate body and to the parson as a paid teacher of religion."

Nothing seems to put off work-people sooner than the institutionalism of the Church. In other words, ecclesiasticism. Work-people themselves often call it Churchianity. The growing number of book-lovers among them—and when the working man reads at all he nearly always reads well (his small library is a library of standard works)—can generally quote authorities to support what they say against the Churches. They are ready with John Morley: "Churchmen in all ages are divided into those on the one hand who think most of institutions, and those on the other who think most of the spirit on which the institutions stand." They add a word of their own: "We don't want Church institutionalism. It leads to intolerance, superstition, loss of liberty, and persecution; and then the cause of the people goes to the wall."

They hold that the kingdom of heaven is not in the Church as an institution, but in the Church as a people, and that often the people in whom the kingdom of heaven is most manifest are not connected with the Church as an institution at all. They see that Churches and the societies and schools connected with them are, as ecclesiastical institutions, often badly

conducted. They see many such institutions not half so well managed as their Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies. They tell you that a Town Council, elected as it is by the people, conducts its work better than a bench of bishops or an assembly of Nonconformist ministers. Whatever is done unjustly by the public body is soon found out and dealt with in the open, but whatever is done unjustly in the ecclesiastical body is often long hidden in secret and sometimes hushed up darkly, so that they who would lead the people cause them to err and go astray.

The thoughtful workman has learnt that officialism, institutionalism, and tradition have put a dead hand upon the Church as upon other organisations. In the Church as in the Army these things make for caste and snobbery and inefficiency.

In this view of his, the book-reading, thoughtful working man is at one with many distinguished Churchmen. "Officialism is the dry-rot of all the Churches," Dr. A. Maclaren maintains, "and is found as rampant amongst democratic Nonconformists as amongst the more hierarchical communities."

Would the working people have heard Christ

gladly had He come to them with the manner and the message of modern ministers? What would the people have thought had He come to them talking about the Church like so many ministers to-day, referring to "her sacraments" and "her traditions," as though the Church were some mysterious, glorified female mummy. "I cannot endure a man," said Bishop Creighton, "who refers to the Church as she."

Work-people of to-day generally associate the Church with parsons and buildings. They seldom if ever hear that the Church is any body of men and women, whatever they may call themselves, who "do My will," or are "gathered together in My name." Or, as Ruskin puts it: "There is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the one holy and Mother Church which ever was or ever shall be."

When work-people go into the question of religion for themselves, as they sometimes do, they side with that seventeenth century Canon of Windsor, John Hales, who said of the authority of the Church, its fathers, and its councils, "It is none." They have his contemporary, pious Jeremy Taylor—whose *Holy Living and Dying* they are told to-day in the *Clarion*

to read reverently—to support them in their claim that reason was one means of interpreting the Bible, and that the certainty of the conclusion which reason drew from the Bible varied with the conditions of reason itself.

And then if you want Scripture, they have Christ's reproof to the Church of His own day: "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."

Or they echo words used by Cromwell in a speech to Parliament: "These men who live upon their mumpsimus and sumpsimus, their masses and Service Books, their dead and carnal worship,—no marvel if they be strangers to God, and to the works of God, and to spiritual dispensation. And because they say and believe thus, must we do so, too?"

## Churches no longer speak the Language of the People

The Churches have ceased to speak the language of the people. Work-people view

ministers as men who are ecclesiastically minded, and the ecclesiastical mind work-people never have been able to understand. The late Bishop of London could not understand it. "If the writer of the Book of Proverbs were writing in the present day," said he, "he would put among the unsearchable things 'the clerical mind'"

Work-people see the Churches clinging to men-made forms and men-made traditions, and quarrelling over these trumpery things while the poor perisheth and no man layeth it to heart. They do not find the Churches talking to the people like Christ, in homely illustrations by the way: "A certain man had two sons"; "Which of you intending to build"; "I have compassion on the multitude"; "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard."

All this they can understand. It is human. It is of their daily life. But the ways of the Churches are strange and dark to them. So they go in good numbers to P.S.A.s, Adult Schools, and Men's Sunday Meetings. They go there though ministers of both the Established Church

and the Free Churches often pour ridicule on these gatherings. The bewildered workman seeking to know more of Christ, finds modern Churches cold, unhelpful, unintelligible; yet hears himself laughed at, or patronisingly commiserated, when he attends places more to his liking. He hears such places derisively described by Christian ministers as "centres of undenominationalism," whatever that may mean.

Well might he retort in the words of our Lord, "What do ye more than others?" For, according to the Secretary of the London P.S.A. Federation, the movement in London alone has during its fifteen years' existence now established one hundred and twenty societies, having about thirty thousand members. He says: "The P.S.A. and Adult School movement are succeeding in a manner hitherto unrealised in promoting the worship of God among working men, and incidentally in providing recruits to and future congregations for our oft-lamented empty churches."

At any rate it is evident these places, unlike the Churches, have not ceased to speak the language of the people. The Adult Sunday Schools in the country numbered exactly nine hundred in August 1905, having an attendance of 56,450

men, and over 2500 youths. Several of the Schools are reserved for women, whose aggregate attendance is given at 17,787. The Secretary of one of the men's schools writes: "We should like you to know the great benefit the School has been to our village, in uniting all sections of the Church of Christ together, and thus enabling us to do a far greater work for our Master. We know no sect and no politics, but all creeds and all parties work together. Since our School started, the congregations at the parish church have been larger. The same is true of the chapel, while the week-night services are far better attended."

What have the orthodox Churches to offer these tens of thousands of working men? If they seek in the Church the Man whom their hearts are yearning to know, what do they find? What has the modern Church to offer the working man? What is the set service at St. Paul's or the City Temple to him? Imagine the bewilderment of a working man without previous training, entering a strange place of worship, no matter of what denomination. The formalism, the social caste, the archaic language, and in some cases the mediæval ceremony, leave his mind a

blank and his heart unsatisfied. He could not find his place in the Service Book, even supposing that one were handed to him. He could make nothing of the mumbling of the congregation, and next to nothing of the prayers and lessons, certainly not if he were in an Established Church. The sermon in nine cases out of ten would be on a lower intellectual level than a Labour address, and not spoken with anything like the same clearness and conviction. Were it the church of a popular Nonconformist preacher he would be received coldly, made to stand about until the seat-holders had arrived, then probably hustled into a back or an uncomfortable seat, and at the collection he would feel he was being called upon to pay for an unprofitable experience, an unintelligible service, and an uninspiring address.

"The fact is," in the words of the Rev. J. E. Watts Ditchfield, who in Bethnal Green conducts some of the most successful working men's services in London, "the Church has not, as a rule, laid itself out to attract and win men. Are there no men able to do for the Church what Burns, Burt, and Crooks have done for Trade Unions?"

There was a time when it was thought the

Christian Social Union, which is confined to communicants of the Church of England, would win work-people. That time is past. The objects of the Union are excellent :—

1. To claim for the Christian law the ultimate authority to rule social practice.

2. To study in common how to apply the moral truths and principles of Christianity to the social and economic difficulties of the present time.

3. To present Christ in practical life as the living Master and King, the enemy of wrong and selfishness, the power of righteousness and love.

That with the right spirit behind it might have become as inspiring as a new Covenant. But the spirit is wanting. Work-people do not belong to the Christian Social Union. The Labour movement knows nothing of it. The Union is now largely an appendage of the High Church party, whose social zeal workmen welcome while filled with amazement to see it associated with a form of Church worship and institutionalism that to them are as far removed from the Christ of the New Testament as Freemasonry or Moham-

medanism. One might say of the members of the Christian Social Union in relation to this pledge of theirs, what Carlyle said of the Scottish Presbyterians when they began to rely on "the word of a Christian king," Charles II., as regards their Covenant: "They are getting into sad difficulties as to realising it."

Among Free Churchmen, the institutional Church has been spoken of as a means of bringing back the people. The institutional Church seems to have some success among young men and women of the class engaged as clerks and shop assistants, but none at all among artisans and labourers. "How can there be any saving of the people by institutional Churches," asked a correspondent the other day in the *Labour Leader*, "unless they be managed and maintained by the people themselves?"

After all, the Churches and their members being what they are, is it to be wondered at that organised Labour keeps aloof? In a conversation I had on this subject with the Rev. Arthur Jephson, L.C.C., Vicar of St. John's, Walworth, he said:—

"The surprising thing to me is not that workpeople don't attend Church. The surprise would

be if they were to attend Church. Why should work-people go to Church? What have they got to learn there? The Church is largely to blame for the alienation of the working classes. The Church is almost always the friend of the landlord and employer. The Church has allied itself with land and capital, and generally with the master against his workmen. Its clergymen have dined with the rich and preached at the poor, instead of doing the exact opposite. To get work-people back to the Church again can only be the work of years or of generations, just as the shortcomings and evils of the Church have been generations in growing up. The workman thinks now, and he is not going to swallow everything the parson says."

General Booth puts the case in a different way. At his modest little home at Hadley Wood he told me he could see nothing in common between the average comfortable church-goer and the stay-away workman.

"The church-goers are told in effect," he said, "that they can have the pleasures of the world with a little religion added. As revealed by the Churches, Christianity is a kind of Worcester sauce to impart a religious flavour to life. What

difference would it make to thousands of church-goers if they were to wake up one morning and find religion a dream?"

And now this very week in which I am writing, the *Labour Leader* comes out with a leading article declaring that "in these later days the Church has fallen into almost obscurity as a power in the moral and civic life of the nation. Its form remains, its habiliments are still gorgeous, but it walks behind, not in front, of the State, and its gestures and speech are almost unheeded in the great march of the nation."

### Why Labour Churches fail

It comes to this, then, that work-people have been so long shut out of the Churches that they have ceased to believe in them.

Church-people may say, Workmen have not been shut out of the Churches. They may exclaim with pained surprise, Are not our Churches free to all? But there are more ways of shutting work-people out than by forbidding them to enter. They have been shut out by caste and respectability, by hypocrisy and ecclesiasticism. The Church to them is the enemy of Labour.

How often do you hear them call the Church a capitalist organisation? They will not attend because, say they, "only employers, trades-people, property owners, and usurers go to Church."

As a class work-people have almost wholly ceased to believe in what passes as the religion of the day. Where they make their mistake is in thinking that the modern religion of the Churches is the whole of Christianity.

A Glasgow minister, the Rev. Ambrose Shepherd, in his book *The Gospel and Social Questions*, deals somewhat severely with working men for their distrust of the Churches. He says of workmen: "They are men and not children. If the Churches do not help them, then let them forswear the Churches, or establish new and better ones."

Well, there is no doubt they have forsworn the Churches. They have even established new ones, though they cannot justly claim to have established better ones.

What are their new Churches? Or rather, what is their new religion?

When they turned their backs on the orthodox Churches they did not find contentment. We have seen how the religious-minded among them

crowd P.S.A. gatherings, Adult Sunday Schools, Men's Sunday Meetings, and other "centres of undenominationalism" (surely a word of fiends and darkness) as they are called by many ministers, evidently under the belief that Christ confines Himself to their own sect. The great mass of work-people however remain indifferent. They are inherently good at heart. They are neither saints nor sinners. It is a very small number who put all their interests in sport. It is a still smaller number who drift into debauched drinking and ruinous betting. Then we have that thoughtful class among them who make social questions their religion. Some of these call their religion the Labour Movement; others, Socialism; others, Humanism. It is this class who have started Labour Churches and Labour Sunday Schools.

Their religion can be summed up as the service of man.

They often admit ruefully that this is an unsatisfying religion. They hardly know why. They have not yet learnt there can be no lasting service of man outside the service of God, no true brotherhood of man without the Fatherhood of God. They have yet to learn that the Labour

Movement, Socialism, Humanism, can no more be made a religion in themselves than Conservatism, Liberalism, Republicanism can be made religions in themselves. These things are but systems of government, and the man, whether he works among bricks or bank-notes, who makes a material system of government the whole of his religion nearly always ends in bitterness and despair.

The teaching at the Labour Churches differs but little from that at the Ethical Societies, and it is as futile to attempt to found a religion on ethics as it is to attempt to found a religion on economics. Nowhere have Labour Churches shown lasting vitality. Frequently they have ended in complete failure. Among the remaining members are many already learning sadly that a gospel of human brotherhood alone, without the binding hand of a Divine Father, leads to dead fruit. Something is needed from our Father in heaven before human brotherhood can have lasting life.

This was brought out in a striking way in a recent discussion on the Labour Church in the *Clarion*. One of the writers, James Hartley of Clitheroe, said: "Yes, let us have brotherly love,

and plenty of it; and if we have a God let us have one who desires our everlasting well-being and is working for the emancipation of humanity. So far as I am concerned I am struggling for a reasonable faith in God, humanity, and the universe; and I am fond of Jesus Christ because He, too, struggled for the same faith."

Another correspondent, who signed himself Far North, wrote: "If we are to have a Socialist Church we must have a definite creed, however simple; it is impossible to satisfy the needs of any human mind and heart without this."

To this Mr. D. B. Forster, who was writing the Labour Church notes in the *Clarion* at the time, made reply: "Here we are entirely at one. For I, too, believe that all effective movements must have creeds. By that I mean that they must have a statement of what they give credence to, or believe in—not necessarily for themselves as individuals but for propaganda purposes."

Here is a proof that vague theories of brotherhood alone do not satisfy. In the starting of Labour Churches, their struggle towards a creed, one can see a yearning for something higher than the material things for which Labour strives. It is the awakening of the soul.

### A NEW PEOPLE'S CHURCH NEEDED

This desire for a separate Church, as I tried to show in a paper contributed to the *Religious Life of London*, only serves to mark afresh the failure of existing Churches to meet the people's needs. The working classes feel that as a class they are completely shut out from all share in the administration of the older Churches. The religious world, with its organisations, is something far removed from the Labour world with its organisations. The two are drifting further apart from each other every year.

In most Churches to-day work-people feel that in spite of their innate energy, their desire for service, their ability for organisation, they have no call to take part in the administrative work. They may be welcomed as members, as that part of the congregation that has to be preached at, but they are not to be admitted into the counsels of the Churches, nor to take part in the annual conferences, nor have any voice in the general scheme of government.

The Salvation Army teach the Churches a lesson here. The Salvationists reach the people through the people; they make all their converts

workers. Here surely is one way to win the people. Give them an interest. Make them responsible for something. A Church with working men sharing its responsibilities and taking part in its official as well as in its spiritual life would of a certainty lay hold of the people. Such a Church would lay hold of working men in order to bring in working men, even as Christ made use of working men to send His message through all ages to all mankind.

Will any existing branch of the Christian Church set about this task, or will it be left to work-people themselves to form a branch of their own, as other classes and other peoples have had to do in previous epochs? There is always life in the old tree when new branches appear. Those who plead loudest for a universal Church generally mean nothing more than a universal ecclesiasticism. "Universality is such a proof of truth as truth itself is ashamed of" was thrown in the teeth of Laud, that great apostle of ecclesiastical universality, by one of his clerical friends.

The spread of the Christian Church is best assured by the growth of new branches, since institutionalism is always rotting the old. So

would it seem that before the work-people of this country become as a class Christian worshippers they must set up their own Church, founded no longer on the ethical basis of mere brotherhood, but on the Divine basis of Fatherhood, on which alone true brotherhood in this world is builded.

Great armies are always found in the people rather than in the barracks. From the people Cromwell, Washington, Napoleon, got men who scattered the armies of institutions and traditions like mist before the gale. So with the armies of peace and goodwill. New life for the eternal combat against evil comes from the people.

Christ found the Church of God steeped in institutionalism and traditions. He refounded it upon working people. He sought neither priest nor elder, but men and women very much like the ordinary working men and women outside the Churches to-day. Christ had a deep regard for the erring, everyday, commonplace man and woman.

And ever since the man in the street and fishermen and simple-minded women heard the Truth from Christ's own lips, and lived and taught the Word in their lives, Christianity has

always received new impulse from the people. "For whatever be the Divine Secret," says Mr. G. K. Chesterton, "at least it lies on the side furthest away from pedants and their definitions, and nearest to the silver souls of quiet people."

The quiet, abused, hard-working common people,—the labouring classes whose lives become wholesome in the daily realities of love and hate, and work and rest, and joy and sorrow, whose toiling, suffering, and smiling save them from the fatal mistake of the Churches in substituting religious thought for godly action,—these are they who have saved the Christian Church from the dead hand of institutionalism, from the folly and superstition of tradition. From the time that Peter and Paul shook off the ecclesiastical bonds that would have confined their teaching to their own circles, and went forth to found Churches among the people of other kinds and countries, the great Christian teachers have invariably had to go and do likewise. They also like Peter and Paul have always had to withstand the grumbling and opposition of those who deemed themselves the select Churches. This was the way of Francis of Assisi, Savonarola, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, Wesley, and Booth.

In face of all these lessons, the caste and snobbery of the Churches remain little changed. It is either, "We are right and you are wrong," or, "We are superior and you are to be pitied and patronised." The Roman Catholics consider themselves superior to the Anglicans, the Anglicans scoff at the Nonconformists, the Presbyterians look down upon the Congregationalists, the Wesleyans think they are more respectable than the Primitive Methodists, and they all adopt patronising airs towards the Salvationists.

Let it be repeated, the common people have always saved the Christian Church from paralysis. The Christian Church has generally derided them for doing it. It is always from the so-called lower stages of life that the Christian Church has been revived. The Welsh revival sprang from the miners. No bishop ever created such a working-class revival. "The bishops!" said a clergyman in my presence the other day, "who are they? They are a body of safe mediocrities appointed by an infidel Government." In our own time the revival of religion among the people is left to coal-miners like Evan Roberts, to gypsies like Gypsy Smith, to railway

clerks like John M'Neill, to soldiers like W. R. Lane.

There is a passage in Augustine Birrell's introduction to the *Memoirs* of that sturdy Labour leader Henry Broadhurst, which reveals as by a lightning flash the widely divergent ways of Labour and the Churches. What can be more delightfully unexpected, asks Mr. Birrell, than to find that Mr. Broadhurst was born at Littlemore? "During all Dr. Newman's solemn years of retirement, when such strange visitants, reserved for fates so varied, as J. A. Froude and Mark Pattison, and the repulsed Manning, came tapping at his door, the village lanes resounded with the cry of the future Parliamentary secretary of the Trades Union Congress, a body which records a movement certainly no less significant than the one inseparably associated with the great Cardinal of Rome."

That passage glows with a great meaning. The Churches imagine a change of thought among a few of its men stands for a far-reaching movement in the country, whereas compared with the Trade Union movement in reality it is only a little trumpery incident that no more affects the great body of the people than the falling to

the ground of a handful of leaves. The Oxford Movement fades into nothingness by the side of the Labour movement. The child of a stonemason in the village of Newman's retirement is destined to stir to the depths great masses of Britain's workers, and by hard striving and doing and a faith that knew no gloom to lead them a few steps nearer the light. Could Newman have known that outside his windows a lad was playing who was destined to direct the thoughts and shape the lives of thousands of our working population, his own meditations might have led him less frequently into the mists of an impotent ecclesiasticism.

### Work-People to save the Churches

Some of us who despair of the Churches breathing new life into the people, believe the people are destined to breathe new life into the Churches. I believe in the people more than I believe in the Churches. The Churches are but man's images of God, but the people are God's images of Himself. Not in ornate chapels nor in hallowed cathedrals, but in the people lies the true temple of God.

When the new wave of Agnosticism was sweeping over the country two years ago as a result of Mr. Blatchford's writings, a clergyman of wide learning and broad outlook told a body of Churchmen, "It serves us all jolly well right; we've brought this upon ourselves." But it is not Agnosticism that has laid hold of our working people. There is unhappily something worse eating into the lives of the great mass of our labourers and mechanics. Avowed Agnosticism is not so deadly as callous indifference. And for this indifference as well as for the Agnosticism shall the Churches not be held unaccountable? For, after all, the indifference of the people to Christianity is but the reflection of the indifference of the Churches to Christianity—a sure and terrible symbol of the wrath of God.

It may be there will rise up again a great Christian teacher whose message the working people again will hear gladly; maybe he will gather them about him into a new Christian fellowship. Such a man would seem to need more of the spirit of Francis of Assisi than of Wesley, since his first essential would have to be "the inestimable treasure of most holy

poverty." Wesley's was the voice of the middle classes. This one's will be the voice of the working classes. The voice may come from the schools and churches as Wesley's came, or it may come from out of the people themselves, as came the voice of the working man's Son of Nazareth.

I believe the voice will come from the people. God saves the people by the people. Already in this dark hour there are signs of change and hope. Not long ago I spent a Saturday afternoon at the Garden City of Letchworth, and there I saw workmen erecting a church. They were doing this voluntarily after their ordinary work hours, and I learnt that not only every Saturday afternoon but every evening they gave up their leisure to this task of building a house of God.

Of this I feel sure, whatever their estrangement from the Churches to-day, the working classes of England still remain the most religious-minded class in the country.

"It has sometimes seemed of late," said the Rev. F. B. Meyer, in his presidential address to the Free Church Council at Newcastle, "that in the movements and gatherings of working men there was more of the spirit of Christ than in certain pretentious cathedrals and temples."

The other day I learnt of a striking instance. In the chain-making district of Cradley is the little village of Overend. Down at the far end of the village is a chain-shop, owned by one Elijah Cole. Opposite the shop there lived a young married engineer called Richard Finch, who thus modestly tells how he started a great revival there :—

"It had got to a quarter-past eight one Sunday evening when I said to the wife, 'I think I will go across to the chain-shop and see if those fellows will let me speak to them. Perhaps I can do them some good.' The wife said, 'Be careful; they will very likely be all drunk by now.' When I got inside you could scarcely make anything out for smoke. There was a fire-bucket in the middle of the room, and round it were twelve or fifteen men, some of them the worse for beer, and they were pitching coins on the floor. They all knew me, and I asked if they would let me speak to them. 'Thee cosn't do a better thing,' one of the roughest of them said. I spoke for about twenty minutes, and closed with prayer. They were all most attentive, and several of them asked me to come again. The following night I had just got in from work when

there came a rap at the door. A little lad touched his cap and said, 'If you please, Mr. Finch, the shop is full of men, and they have sent me across to see if you will go and speak to them again.' When I went across it was as the lad had said, the shop was full. I went again on the Tuesday, the Wednesday, and the Thursday. At the close of the Thursday meeting one of the fellows jumped up and said, 'This game won't do; I shall have to mend my ways.' A cripple said, 'I can't get up; but I shall mend my ways, too.' For three months we had a meeting there every night—sometimes with a hundred people packed in the little chain-shop. Now we are building a chapel of our own, which is to be strictly undenominational. Bricks have been given to us, and horses and carts lent to us. All the labour will be voluntary. The men have thrown themselves into the work very enthusiastically, and in a few weeks the chapel will be ready for opening."

So it still remains that the instinctive philosophy of the people is faith in Christ. When Christ is presented to the people, not as a churchy Christ, but as He presented Himself, the people believe in Him.

Ruskin pictures some one calling working people rough-jacketed, rough-coated persons, with sensual desire and grovelling thought, foul of body and coarse of soul (they have been called equally hard names by Christian ministers in our own day), and he makes this reply: "It may be so; nevertheless, such as they are, they are the holiest, perfectest, purest persons the earth can at present show. They may be what you have said; but if so, they are yet holier than we who have left them thus."

Or, as put by another of our latter-day prophets, the Practical Labour of England is, very audibly, though very inarticulately as yet, the one God's voice we have heard in these two atheistical centuries. A Splendour of God, Carlyle tells us further, will in one form or other have to unfold itself from the heart of these our industrial ages; "or they will never get themselves organised; but continue chaotic, distressed, distracted ever more, and have to perish in frantic suicidal dissolution."

They will not perish; they will conquer and thrive. For even now, through the mist and the dark, some of us can see the first streaks of light proclaiming that a Splendour of God is at hand.

# I

## By DEAN KITCHIN

Is there a way by which we can recover Labour's attention and goodwill?

Speaking of the working man, one speaks of the very backbone of English prosperity, the huge majority of our people, whose welfare is our greatest interest. A preacher lately, enlarging on these difficulties, and on the grimy things waiting to be cleaned up, said that in this world's laundry there was so much dirty linen to be washed, that he looked round with anxiety—and there he saw the Baptists with plenty of water, and the Wesleyans kindling the fire; but the Church of England seemed to him to have a monopoly of the starch!

This is the popular explanation of the failure;—there is only too much truth in it. The Church of England has built herself round so carefully with respectable proprieties that

it cannot easily adapt itself to the needs of a new age, or to a totally changed and enlarged conception of the relations of man to man. Indeed, it must be confessed that an ancient system, which believes in the *via media*, is bound to resist all serious changes, and looks with dazed eyes at the startling demands of a day of machines and movement. Here and there a noble evangelist is doing his best, and rallies the people round him; yet this is but an isolated endeavour, which often ends in failure: the hero dies, the old wheels still rotate, no new way has been opened.

As a rule, the complaint of the men is very plain, "It is not what we want." And this reply comes from both town and country. In the country we have been humble, somewhat servile, to the squire, and to the peasant patronising; at least our wives have been. In the town the Church does far better, save that the rapid growth of population seems to make success hopeless; so that even with heroic efforts we have lost hold of the best of the workers. The thoughtful men find no solution in our sermons and services for the difficulties that oppress them; they ask ques-

tions, and their inquiry is too often treated as rebellion. It stands out with ominous clearness that the average Church Sunday does not give the requisite rest and refreshment to a man's jaded spirit. Current theology can, happily, soothe the troubled affections, console the broken-hearted, raise the mourners, and testify to the strength and purer atmosphere of the moral life. But when a busy man wants to know how to fit in his Christianity with the grinding and shifty business of his daily work, I fear that he feels the tremendous line drawn between Sundays and week-days—a line which never should have existed. The Churches refuse to see that the dogmas they insist on, and the morality they commend, are pale beside the wants of the thirsty world. How can they bring the higher and better life into more direct connection with the crushing difficulties which haunt the dark conditions of daily toil and stress?

It seems that our general system of work in what is technically styled the "Missionary field" also meets with a similar charge of stiffness and apparently of failure. It is all patronising again; it has small elasticity, it innocently believes that a religious system which falls in with

the wishes of comfortable Englishmen will also fit the thousand varied forms of social existence, the thousand tints of habit and usage; we think that we can impose our much-loved scheme of compromises on every one, disregarding the stern differences of thought and life. It is for our missionaries just as it was early in the nineteenth century with our English politicians, who told us that our halting and creaking Parliamentary institutions would suit everybody, and be for every one the invariable law of civic life. It did not matter whether we were trying the experiment on a highly cultivated race, or on a group of savages; it would do just as well for all. Here is the stiffness which stifles growth; we neither have ideals of our own nor let others have any; we must impose our ancient compromises on people who have no need for them. This stiffness goes with, and accounts for, that self-repression and objection to showing emotion, which has been the cause of many of our blunders at home and abroad. It is the root of the failure of all our dealings with the Celtic populations. The qualities in which they are strong are those in which we are weak; and, being weak, we despise not ourselves but them.

It is much the same in our attitude towards religious differences. While we repress emotional movements, we also are angry with, and intolerant of, intellectual or spiritual liveliness. We comfort ourselves under a sense of failure by urging that a certain rigidity (as of an iron bar) is wanted to keep Church institutions steady and permanent. Emotional movements may be waves which rise and fall, with noise and little result; we think that they don't build up, but wash down; by keeping emotion well under control we have a strong long-lived edifice; it is well whitewashed; indeed they tell us that thin and angular men live longer than the florid and robust.

So by declining to pick up the wounded traveller we keep our temple worship untainted; the heart may be placid, unmoved; while the poor fellow bleeds to death in the gutter.

At any rate there is no inconvenient expansion, and we try no new thing. When, in cultivation, certain ripened pods are wanted to secure another year's growth and enlargement in their plants, they begin by exploding themselves with a bang, as one has often heard them in a sunny afternoon in autumn, and so by self-

devotion they shed their seeds abroad. This the Church dare not do; to die that others may live seems to be beyond her horizon.

This, then, I take to be the first cause of that failure of religion to arrest the attention of working folk which is the alarming thing to us all. It cannot adapt itself; it would like to catch the ear and heart of all, but it is clumsy, and out of its element, and therefore fails. The workers want to be moved and excited. In our people there is a deep well of wholesome emotion. One sees it in their favourite popular entertainments, in which, as in the old Astley's over Westminster Bridge, no melodrama had a chance unless the virtuous triumphed and the malignant fell. They want strains in less "good taste" than those we sing them. Most of our efforts have in them neither the deep, mysterious appeals of one side nor the emotional stirring of the other side; we offer neither Roman mysteries nor the soul-swaying eloquence of the Salvationists.

Of all the functions of the Christian religion two are supreme: first, it must break down the barriers of social distinction, proclaiming the equality of all before the Divine presence; and, secondly, it must enkindle a warmth of gratitude

in the human breast—a gratitude akin to wonder, which leads up to the true end of religion, the passionate love and obedience towards God the Father of all. These two duties of Christ's Church are closely interwoven; they spell a genuine communion of souls in Church and daily life. When the Church forgets this, and joins hands with "Society," frowning on the inconvenient inquirers, it freezes out all dangerous heat of emotion.

In all this we have the prime obstacle to the winning of the attention and love of the working men; they are repelled by the high and stiff respectability of our Church. Here and there a man who discerns the higher things, and cares little for the *convenances* of the day, has proved that he can, like Dolling, gather men round him in crowds. In such a case as his, the warm Celtic imagination and the brotherly spirit in him created an atmosphere which enabled the saddest and the poorest to breathe, and they flocked to listen. He had no great gifts; his convictions were often matters with which we could not sympathise completely; still, the main thing was that he cleansed his streets (and they used to be very foul) of bad characters; even the worst

felt that Dolling was their friend, and that the religion he preached and acted was full of consolation for their wounded state. Yet such men are few, and are not always well seen by the authorities: they overstep the conventional lines, and give qualms to those who love to drive along the level road.

I think too that both the Roman Catholics and the Nonconformists feel that the bulk and the best of the labouring world are slipping from them also; their influence over them does not grow. It is bad to feel that we are all losing hold. The clue to this painful fact seems to be this: Each age has trends and currents of its own, which it feels and is carried along with; if any system, religious or political, fails to recognise these movements, and neglects them, the penalty is that they in their turn will be neglected.

The main movements of to-day all tend towards a more humane treatment of questions bearing on the life of men around us. Every one certainly is affected by it. We may not know that we are being whirled round in space, yet we are so moving on all the same; if we resisted it, we should all be swept away. There is an old remark which fits this condition of things: it is that "the

arguments which swayed one age fall absolutely powerless on another"; as the logical proofs of the Schoolmen, and their strict deductions, were hopelessly neglected by the new forces of the sixteenth century. A modern platform does not echo to the appeals of an ancient "Ambo." In all things, religious or political, we have to reckon with this humanitarian spirit.

This is why the whole ground of modern politics is changing so fast at the present moment; this too is why the artisan world which used to be so indifferent in such matters is now keen to enter into the fray. In the future we shall have fewer abstentions, because the labourers are coming to see that their interests coincide with those of the humaner prophets.

In the "religious world" the movement for justice and equal rights, for decent houses, for fair conditions of labour, and the many questions of daily life, has not yet been understood: it has not got into the bones and marrow of the preachers and Church workers. In fact, those of us who do feel it and try to go with it, are credited often by a suspicious public with ulterior aims of our own, or with a fear that we are but repeating the old system of patronage

from which Labour has scarcely shaken itself free: for under the old style the independent workman, bravely winning his own bread and that of his children, has smarted silently under the good advice of his comfortable betters, and often hates the very word Charity. The excellent, well-meaning wives of us all offend more or less unconsciously in two ways: they are either patronising Lady Bountifuls, or they meddle with domestic matters, till the man's castle seems to be in the hands of the enemy. Their very virtues offend: people are up in arms if rebuked for dirt and lack of fresh air, and so on. For the working man feels, probably wrongly, that his independence is attacked; his home should be inviolate for him, yet the kind visitor is but a gentle form of the inspector who will ere long compel men, whether they like it or no, to obey sanitary laws, and to live wholesome lives.

One feels that these resistances have in them a very good element; that the sanctity of home is in them, and must be encouraged in every way. We can succeed with the best of the artisans only if we desist from doles, and change from interference into friendship. The times

demand a teaching very practical, very kindly. The older appeals of a current theology were from the pulpit; we want the brotherly sacrament of life in common. It is from the lack of the humane side, a side as prominent in the Bible as that of any doctrine, that we owe much of the alienation of the working man. The old way preached a strict theology, with a background of threats; it was a system based on Milton's *Paradise Lost* rather than on his *Paradise Regained*; it preached what we should gain by being good, what we should lose if bad; it let the hearers understand that it was a virtuous selfishness; echoing such arguments as Bishop Butler insists on, when he tells us that on the balance of probabilities ("probability is the very guide of life") it is certain that a good life will be happier, here and hereafter, than an immoral life; and that if he counted chances a man would be a fool to spurn the invitations of the Christian religion.

We should all agree that a return to the "dry bones" of eighteenth century sermons would be a disaster. For these were based on Seneca or Marcus Aurelius, and gave no emphasis to the humane doctrines of the Bible. Yet we

can feel a distinct set of the tide towards these Latin moralists: it is worth the while of the publishers of the day to issue penny books of Seneca, or other ancient writers on morals. It is plain that the Churches would be wise if they set social matters in the front of their religious teaching.

The teeming public of this day is not so much given to recklessness or violence in evil as horribly indifferent: the world around takes no heed to our cries. They think it all hollow; they think that those charged with the message either don't understand, or (if they do) do not believe. They think that they neither know their own message nor the spirit of those to whom it is addressed. From this it is an easy jump to a scornful opinion that the preacher is but skin-deep; that he is profoundly ignorant of the strong forces of evil which surround and attack the working man. It is, at least, a suspicion natural enough, though often unfair. For the teachers stand on one plane, and the hearers on another; and neither understands the other. It is, as mathematicians would say, the language of those who live in "three dimensions," addressed to a public who live in "two dimensions."

And still more difficult is the case when the appeals seem to sketch out life in a "fourth dimension," in which alone the more transcendental doctrines of the faith can live. In this case the whole scheme must seem to practical men fanciful, even absurd.

There is another neglected point: our preachers seem to fail to recognise the quickly-growing intelligence of their auditories. It is a curious intelligence, often very shrewd and sceptical, always much limited, and by sheer force of circumstances kept on strictly practical lines. For one who has a sensitive conscience, and feels remorse for, or, at least, discomfort in bad courses, there are dozens who "take life as they find it." Their daily work has no thoughts of higher interest; and indifference towards the marvels of nature or the triumphs of art, and still more towards the active teachings of religion, is the common result. On the other side are the smaller number, who are more sensitive, and liable to the gusts and passions of any sudden appeal.

In our day (it is a marked phenomenon of the times) Revivalism has deeply felt this prevailing tendency. It has a strong practical

side: it successfully grapples with the submerged multitude, so far as its powers can reach; it faces the moral evils of the day; and we have seen in the late remarkable movement in Wales and elsewhere, that people in watching the advance appeal much more than ever to the moral improvement which follows emotion and conversion. That the work has been genuine, solid, and lasting has been made clear by the fact that it has brought about a wonderful diminution of drink; by cessation of feuds; by happiness of homes; by well-fed, well-clad children; by peace, in a word, and plenty. At any rate the present efforts of these self-sacrificing revivalists are to be judged by their fruits—"By their fruits ye shall know them." Here is their evidence of permanence; here is a likelihood that they have found, amid wild outbursts of enthusiasm, the more rational view of the Christian religion as applied to the modern terms of labour and daily life.

We might classify religions and religious feelings either as sensuous or theatrical; or as the religion of a moral nature feeling itself incomplete, and craving guidance and development, and striving towards not only morality,

but towards that nobler thing, justice; or as demanding strenuous powers of thought and quickened activities of intellect; or as appealing to the imagination, and finding food and lodging amid the land of mysteries, in the strange world over the border. If we look at our religious efforts from these four points of view we may perhaps learn where our mistakes come in.

It is obvious that there is a strong craving in modern and restless society for some sensuous arrangement of worship—some beautiful and satisfying expression of religious feeling. I fear that a careful observer will also note that in this there is but a faint effect on the activities of real life; emotion devours itself. We may heap on attractions, like newspaper headlines; may insist on ever finer and more thrilling music, and may sing sweet modern hymns, the outcome of Spohr's tuneful music; hymns of which sardonic Dr. Wesley once replied to a lady who wished him to admire one of them: "Oh! yes; you would like a diet of bath-buns!" As Bishop Butler warns us, impressions never translated into action make the heart hard; and the jaded sensations of emotional worshippers often end in unseemly indifference or misplaced merriment.

This is one reason why Scripture puns and jokes are so popular. And, considering the working classes, we see that it has little effect on the question we are discussing. Even graphic tales from the Mission field fail to arrest their attention; they feel that these efforts belong to a very different world from theirs. Such noble books as the Life of Dr. Paton do not move them; they think the effort misplaced, knowing how much there is amiss at home; they have, too, a profound distrust of motives beyond their ken, of professions of which they cannot weigh the practice. Shall we then jump to a conclusion, and declare that they have no interest on the religious side? Surely this would also be an injustice. Such a man may be far from the romantic temperament, or from the religious, ignorant spirit of the Breton "devout peasant"; his mind has a very different outlook, and yet has a true religious side. Sensuous or theatrical worship does not touch him; nor is his education so far advanced that intellectual appeals can deeply interest him; the rough-handed life he leads forbids him to listen to, or be moved by, tales which would stir a childish spirit. Our best chance with him lies in practical appeals to him for

moral betterment. His intellectual efforts may be rough, and leading to no vista of diviner knowledge; his thoughts go naturally to the practical problems of his life: he broods over the hardness of his lot, compared with that of others whose equal difficulties he does not see at all; nor can he be enamoured of the threescore years and ten of one monotonous form of toil, undertaken not for the joy of work, but for bread; it leads to the wealth of others, while he remains within hail of the workhouse. No wonder that he is irritated by the unjust divisions of life; everything is like a fate against him, depressing him, conspiring against him, making very difficult even so simple and rudimentary a matter as the creation of a tidy home for his wife and little ones. So when the preacher preaches to him of the compensations of another life he slips away, because he will have none of this; he wants his state redressed now, he wants help for his manful working for it; and indeed he naturally resents the deferring of betterment to a dim and uncertain future.

When the North American secretary of that admirable society, the Young Men's Christian Association, tells us that "the easiest thing we

are doing is to get working men to respond to the religious appeal," he has clearly facts at his back. Even then he goes on to a phase which touches the current evil: "Most people in their efforts on behalf of the working man take it for granted that the religious work is to be left out," and he adds, "I cannot understand why a man who works with his hands should be less religious than a man who works with his head." "We find the religious side of our work appealing to all denominations" (Budgett Meakin, *Model Factories*, p. 298). Here are manful and hopeful words, from one who has a broad knowledge of mankind. One might say that the average worker is not hostile to pious efforts; he is only dissatisfied with the modern expression and exposition of religious belief; for it is often severed from the practical problems of life. If we could strike the right key-note, we might at once find the working man no longer a careless hearer; we should have no difficulty in attracting him to our side.

Mr Seebohm Rowntree speaks from a very large and thorough knowledge of artisan ways, and gives us his view as to the first duty before us. "Probably," he says, "much more benefi-

cial influence may be created through the medium of their places of employment, and of their home surroundings, than is at present exercised by the Churches." In fact, we must travel along their lines, not ours, if we desire to make friends with them and to catch their attention.

It must be granted that somewhere there is a lack of touch; as one has simply said: "The workers have left the Church because the Church first left them." The connection must be coupled up again if we are to do any good. A true friend of Labour says plainly: "The root-cause of most of the trouble which to-day distracts the industrial world is the loss of touch between employers and employed." The same is true of Church work: we have lapsed into forgetfulness of the big Frankenstein just outside our doors, and are happy only because he does not care to walk into our garden. The teacher has failed to teach those outside his social horizon; partly by working for select folk, partly because he has not learnt the secret of Christ, of whose teaching we read that "the common people heard Him gladly." For then indeed the "Gospel was preached to the poor."

We are still under the glamour of that false theory which used to be called the *Disciplina Arcani*, the doctrine of Reserve. An acute thinker like the great Dr. Newman sacrificed the old group of arguments on the structure of the Church in the earliest ages for the sake of his doctrine of Development, which is the same thing as the doctrine of Reserve. He needed a likely scheme to account for the obvious historical differences which every one can see who contrasts the primitive Church of the Acts of the Apostles with the hardened and militant Church of the Nicene period, and, still more, with the imperial claims of the Court of Rome after the eleventh century. How is he to account for this tremendous gap between the Church of the Bible and the elaborate, minute, and far-extended system of Church government, which in different forms has ruled throughout the world? The thought is that all the later-appearing elements of dogma, and all the elaborations of Creeds, and all the constitutional fabric of Churches, were known to the Apostles, and by Divine leading concealed by them from their ignorant followers, and even from the hopeful catechumens. The simplicity of the Gospels was, in this view, a

pleasing screen hiding the mysteries beneath; and according to this theory of growth, the depositaries of this secret were guided to let it be known, by cautious degrees, as the disciples could bear it: thus the system developed itself carefully, with many reservations, and much consideration of the right and the wrong time, until at last it was shaped into the magnificent Church hierarchy, the mysteries of High Sacramental theories, and a strongly constructed Church system, a community spreading abroad under the name of Christ. Hereby the simple message of the Gospel to man grew dim, and was treated with little respect, as being but the outer covering of an inner mystery of faith; the Bible took a secondary place, guaranteed by the Church, which was the judge of it, and was grudgingly entrusted to the people.

Religious bodies are still much hampered by fetters of use and formulas; simple people cannot understand our self-made limitations. They fall away; they think that we have some concealed motive of our own—that ours is an interested system, of which they are naturally suspicious.

For all this there is but one solution: *ad*

*Deos referre auctores*, as Livy said—we must appeal back to the original documents and words of Christ Himself; and must be prepared to do for religion what the new School of History has largely done for their side of learning—test everything by the original documents, and guarantee documents by a searching critical treatment of their claims. Then we shall find ourselves on firm ground: a foundation fit for us to build on. No intermediate authority shall stand between us and our duty of investigation and exposition; no directory of our faith, no drill-sergeants for our enthusiasm—in a word, we must sit at Jesus' feet, and learn from Him, and hear His gracious words, and find peace for our souls.

It is by the true inspiration of Christ that the force of Christianity will again move the hearts of the people. Religion has not to fight against a smooth stagnation: she must make herself heard in the tumult of a social condition of great discontent, a stormy sea of opinions, lashed hither and thither by waves and hurricanes of doubt and anger, by a sense of injustice, to which Churches have lent their sanction, and of inequalities which have been aggravated by the

sanctimonies of religion. We want a new St. James to preach to us the popular rights of man. When, quite lately, a simple swineherd at Wilhelmsdorf was asked to come into the service of the monks at the farm-colony at Maria Veen, to look after their pigs, he went gladly; but after a month he was found again at Wilhelmsdorf gate praying to be readmitted. "But why," they asked, "did you desert your kind monks?" "Oh," he replied, "those monks were always a-praying, and their church bell never stopped. *I could not do my duty by my pigs*; and so I have come back."

Here is, in a short form, a parable of the working man's difficulty with all religion. It does not penetrate to the pigsty; the swineherd therefore will not make friends with it.

As Ruskin well said in 1870: "God is in the poorest man's cottage — it is advisable that He should be well housed." It is the forgetting this that has undone us. The need of a simple, strong religion belongs more specially to the working folk and their homes; and a genuine faith would not merely reach those homes, but would make present abominations in them absolutely impossible. For every house is

God's house, and Society has turned it into a den of thieves. If the Churches are to overcome this evil they must abandon what Herbert Spencer calls the weak point of professing Christendom: "We profess one day in the week a doctrine of human duty, which we renounce in practice on the other six days." Our religion henceforth, if the people are to be won, must avoid this hypocrisy as the chief evil; and our preaching must be allied intimately, thoroughly, and for ever, with a daily life of duty and love towards the neighbour. We have to prove the badness of one of the main doctrines of evolution, namely, that in this fighting world "Blessed are the strong, for they shall devour the weak." The Gospel of Christ shall be the cure for this fierce side of the evolutionary gospel: it champions the weak, the downcast, the overwrought; it is the one power which resists the heartless progress of the world. It is a true saying of Lionel Tollemache, that "Religion widens, while Science narrows, the gulf between man and beast." It is also plain that if Religion is true to her splendid calling, she will in the end bring equality, and reduce the still greater gulf between man and man.

Thus, then, to sum up my simple thoughts about the relations between working men and the Churches, let me say that, first, we have to rid ourselves of that stiffness and formality, which cling like a bur to the coats of the faithful, as a first step towards making our churches and chapels homes of brethren, and of securing the best thing of all, the loving spirit. There are many among our younger clergy and ministers who have this grace in them; there are not a few marvellous examples of men who have cheerfully laid down their lives for the brethren. And this too from a real knowledge of the working men and their class difficulties. A true thing was once said of patriotism: "Give me the making of the people's songs, and I care not who makes their laws." It is the same with the religious emotion: the hymns reach the humblest, melt the hardest, set the stubborn on the right lines; stubbornness is a most valuable characteristic of a man, if it works in the right direction.

Next; our proclamation must be a proclamation of the equal rights of all, the true brotherhood, which Christ first preached, and we must preach still. And this, in other words,

is the gospel of a humane life. Religion must be the antidote to all the social poisons of the time. We shall have to take up a modified Elberfeldt system, in which the Christian work will be done by not merely the official people with their Sunday duties, but by the joint action of society of all classes—all caring for the happiness of each; each warming under the glow of human brotherhood into a better and larger man.

If this can be brought into action—and the interest of it equals its importance—we shall escape from the danger which Count Tolstoy warns us against. In his paper on the Decay of Religion he says that "a considerable portion of people now profess a distorted Christian faith; another portion follows the gospel of science, from which no rational guidance for conduct can be evolved; and the third division is the largest of all three, and is composed of people who have freed themselves from all Church faith, and, having learnt from the scientific class that there ought to be no religion at all, live an animal life, sensuous, egotistical, only caring to carry on the wretched struggle of life with a view to becoming

always 'the Overman.' And so, life for the mass of people has no guiding principle at all, and daily grows more senseless and, as by a contradiction, more sensible to suffering."

If we have any true faith in the modern growth of our religion, our first duty is to point out this better way, and to rescue mankind from the horrible fate that Tolstoy sketches for us all. Be practical, make brotherhood the first duty of man, move in the primitive atmosphere of the love of Christ—seeing His good humane deeds, and copying them; hearing His beautiful words of emancipation, and being, as we should be, free.

We should see, from the original Gospel, how Christ did face the problems of His own times; and emulate His example for our own puzzling days. Nowhere can we find this more clearly expressed than in some of the newly discovered "Sayings of Jesus." They too point bravely to a Gospel of Labour. And it is to be remembered that these new-found Sayings are the very earliest Christian documents known to exist: no manuscript of the Gospels exists which is so ancient as they are. Among these remarkable Sayings there is one oracular aphorism

which weds the message of Jesus to daily labour. He says:—

> Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me.
> Cleave the wood, and there I am also.

In all our proclamation of Christ's truth, it will have to be a message for the stonemason and the carpenter. Christ knew all about such true and wholesome work; was He not the Carpenter's Son?

He who had patiently laboured at the bench knew well that in all honest work there is a blessing, and that in every effort there must be a following of Jesus, and a revelation of His love and presence.

I know of no other way of winning back the artisans to the blessed spirit of religion except this: We must preach the frank law of justice; the rule of love; the triumph of equality and toleration. "Democracy," says one, "has won by force the *Habeas Corpus*; let it not risk the loss of the possession of what is harder still, the free *Habeas animum.*"

Every one of us should stand by tolerant freedom, and control our thoughts and opinions, our prejudices and fancies, by the belief that in

the coming regeneration of mankind, our mental and social natures, warmed by the sun of Christ's love and sacrifice, will rise at last to St. Paul's ideal: "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

## II

## By WILL CROOKS, M.P.

Are men and women who never go to church as good as those who go?

Well, I am no judge of what the church-going public would consider good, but I have known the time when if I wanted some kind neighbourly action done the last person to come into my mind would be the regular attendant at church.

Workmen are very critical of those who want to teach them how bad they are. At once they begin to say, "Who made you a judge? Mend in yourself what you see wrong in me."

It is because most of the workmen and workwomen of our country do believe in Christ, although the vast majority do not worship in the orthodox way, that they sorrow alone, getting comfort by their own silent prayer—

a comfort neither parsons nor Church congregations can give.

Can one wonder that poor men and women of independent minds find it very difficult to believe or understand a teacher of Christ's doctrine who can always find a reason why the poor suffer, and an excuse for those who neglect their duty and allow misery and suffering to exist?

I blame both parsons and many of the church-goers too for the scarce attendance of work-people at church. Those parsons and church-goers who are doing their duty (and they are growing in numbers) will, I think, agree that the chief cause of the people's staying away must be found within the Church itself. It is not so much indifference to religion, as some parsons try to make out.

"Let them practice what they preach" is now heard on every side. "They talk of how Christ bade us care for the poor and the sick, yet outside the pulpit and the pew they are above this sort of thing."

Do they carry out the doctrine themselves? Where they do their churches are full to overflowing. I am not now thinking of those

churches where dear old ladies form a large section of the congregation because there is something to be given away, but of those churches where true brotherly love and sympathy, which cannot be bought with money, are given freely to all.

Where I see Christ's teaching reserved for a specially favoured few, it suggests that the Churches fear to increase their congregations too much, lest heaven be not large enough to hold them all, with common people crowding in.

Many parsons cannot approach the poor without a sense of loftiness and a show of patronage which working men and women hate. Although most of them are civil and courteous, converts are not made that way. Then the parson gets downhearted at his failure. He does not see that if he lacks brotherly love and sympathy the ministry is not his place. Such men do more harm than good to Christianity.

Another type of useless parson is the man who wants people to listen to him on his visits but never ask a question or doubt his word. If they do, he sometimes does not hesitate to tell them they are lost. Anyhow,

he soon ceases to visit them and they don't go to church.

This incident will illustrate what I mean. I had been very ill through overwork after the great Dock Strike in 1889. When I was approaching convalescence, and naturally fairly happy at the thought of soon being able to get out and return home, a missioner, as I think he was called, came to see me as I lay in bed in the hospital. He said to me quite bluntly, "Are you not a miserable sinner?"

I said, "*No*; I might be a sinner, but I am not a miserable one just now."

The missioner left my side in disgust; then returned and asked to be allowed to send me a Testament. I consented, and received in a day or two one marked in several places with red ink, apparently intended to impress upon me what a depraved and miserable creature I was.

The missioner called again, and questioned me as to whether I had read the marked passages and what I thought of them.

I replied, as applied to me they were not true.

I shall never forget the look I received, and I expect I was given up as a lost man.

A few minutes after he had left my ward a patient from another ward came to me and said :—

"I say, Twenty-five, that's the way to get rid of them."

I said, "What have *you* done to get rid of him?"

"Oh," he answered, "the missioner said, 'Are you not a miserable sinner?' and I said 'Yes'; and then he said, 'Thank God for that,' and went away."

Well, I am afraid that neither he nor I were much better for that kind of Christian visitor.

Another kind of parson who is no advantage to the Christian Church is the one who thinks his duty begins and ends at the church door.

When the Rev. Charles Sheldon, author of *In His Steps*, was last in England, he and I went to a very poor slum, where I venture to say the people were respectable and God-fearing in the best sense of the word.

Mr. Sheldon spoke to the women in a brotherly way, and asked when they had seen a parson down there.

The answer was, "We *ain't* seen no parson down here since we lived here fifteen years."

He exclaimed to me, "I don't wonder people are bad; I wonder they are as good as they are."

So far as Church buildings are concerned, I have often thought how little they have in common with the people. Especially is this so of the internal arrangements. Christ, as one of the people, was always in touch literally as well as spiritually with them; but the parson who claims to be His representative to-day seems to the people some one apart from themselves. When work-people go to church they see the pulpit a long way from the congregation. Like the preaching, it is much above the people's heads.

I believe that if the pulpit were abolished, or at any rate lowered, both preacher and people would begin to feel akin. Both would, as I can testify, gain inspiration from each other. Many a poor creature would come and worship, who now stands far off as though the Church and God had nothing to do with him or her. We want the people to understand that God cares as much for the man or woman who just peeps in at the door as for the man in the pulpit, and we don't want the service to mystify what Christ made plain.

But then I know it often happens that the parsons have the bishops or the deacons or some Church officials to please. The parson may yearn to get near the heart of his people by newer and simpler methods, to bring a little of heaven on earth to those who need it most, yet he must yield to those who he thinks are the backbone of his church.

A controversy has been going on in the press as to whether women should be allowed in church without hats. I should say Yes, if it will encourage them to worship. At any rate, it would induce their poorer sisters, who have not fine hats and feathers to show off, to come to church for comfort and sympathy. This would in turn inspire the preacher, who, in the absence of gay millinery, might be able to claim the congregation's undivided attention, although I daresay a few critics would still be found discussing the way the women did their hair.

A word to the man to whom God has given the strength to resist temptation, and who is what is called "converted." He is full of good intentions, but they mostly concern himself. If he prospers in business he very often gets the idea that his particular church cannot be run without

him. He instructs the minister as to what he must do, says who shall open the Sale of Work or the Bazaar, and how it shall be laid out. If a majority of the workers decide against him, he threatens to resign and go where he can have his own way. The minister, poor man, is nearly driven out of his mind in trying to make peace among his own flock, instead of using his energy in bringing more to know Christ's comforting message. Men outside know all this as well as those inside. Can you expect the thinking men outside to come in, when they see the Christian message so distorted that it reads, Love as brothers and agree like dogs?

Let those who feel they are "saved" remember that the very belief which gives them capacity to resist evil-doing casts upon them at once a very sacred obligation not to ignore or condemn the weakness which leads into evil-doing weaker brothers and sisters, but to use the power they are blessed with to remove from the path of these weaker ones the temptations which beset them. God is the Father of the "unsaved" slum-dweller as well as of the "saved" church-goer. We all need help and guidance in some way or another. Let us keep in mind that

it was Cain who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

I may add that clothes have an important influence upon church-going, just as bad homes have upon public-house attendance. I think if the Churches would try, say once or twice a week for a while, to run a Service where it was understood every one could go without Sunday clothes, then those who have only the clothes they stand upright in would not be ashamed to attend, as they often are now.

You have only to look at the Adult School movement, and at other unorthodox gatherings, to realise that, with more enlightened methods, working men and women—lost though they may seem to be to the goody-good church-goer—can be awakened to a sense of the fellowship they have in Him who died not to save the Churches, but to save the people.

The Poplar Labour League, for instance, has, in co-operation with the Rector of Poplar, carried on for many years past, during the winter months, a Sunday afternoon meeting at the Town Hall. The meetings are always crowded with working men and their wives, and working girls and lads. The Rector or myself takes the chair—often we

are both on the platform together. The gatherings are not religious in the orthodox sense, nor is any attempt made to teach religion, but I venture to say they have as much influence for good on the work-people of Poplar as many of the Churches. We nearly always begin with music, by singers or players who give their services, and then we have a "talk," generally by a public man, on social questions, on education, on books and authors, and citizenship. Some of our speakers take Biblical subjects.

Thus every week we get together a good company of work-people who ordinarily attend no place of worship on Sunday; and, if nothing more, we keep them out of the public-house, we make them think for themselves, we awaken some sense of citizenship. The presence of the Rector has convinced many, who were formerly hostile to all parsons, Anglican or Nonconformist, that the Churches and Labour can work in harmony. Without pretending to be this, that, or the other, our gatherings have made for the love of one's neighbour, and therefore for the cause of Christ.

## III

### By Dr. R. F. HORTON

The extent of the falling away of the working classes of this country from the Christian Church must not be exaggerated. The *Daily News* survey of the religious life of London brought many surprises to us, and perhaps the most welcome surprise was to find the large attendance at churches, especially Free Churches, in the working-class districts, and especially the large attendance of men. Every one acquainted with the Free Churches knows that they are largely composed of working people: some denominations consist of working people alone. In the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire I have frequently preached to a morning congregation in which two-thirds were men, working men, from the mills; and the evening congregation would be largely composed of the women who had stayed at home in the

morning to prepare the dinner. In estimating church attendance it is often forgotten that the working people are necessarily irregular in their church-going: many go once a month, or even less frequently, but are not to be classed with those who never darken the door of a church. Many go once in a way, on a Sunday School Anniversary or similar occasion, and have, as it were, a visiting acquaintance with the Christian Church. If a census were taken, and all filled up the papers with some thought and sincerity, I venture to think that the number of those who returned themselves as unconnected with any Christian Church would be very small. The avowed infidels would be a small percentage; the deliberate rejectors and enemies of Christ would be a handful.

The attitude of Englishmen to Christianity is one of shy acceptance; the hesitation to be allied with Churches or to attend worship is a proof of the shyness, but certainly does not imply a repudiation of the Christian verities. The wide circulation of the productions of the rationalist press may easily deceive us; a man who reads Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* is not necessarily convinced by it. The average

artisan perceives its hollowness and its fallacies just as the more highly educated reader does. The men who live at close grips with life are quite able to discern bread from a stone, and wheat from chaff. And Science is far too bankrupt, as a guide to the spirit of man, to make much impression on men who feel the strain of living and the certainty of dying.

But while the extent of the falling away may be exaggerated by those who estimate religion from the census of Church attendance, the alienation of the vast bulk of the working classes from Church life and from the habit of worship must be freely admitted; and the reasons of the alienation are well worthy of inquiry. After twenty-five years of observation, and constant thought over the problem, I feel more confident in tracing the reasons than in suggesting the remedies. It is a delicate matter to publish conclusions which are drawn from innumerable facts which are confidential; and I must decline beforehand to offer detailed evidences of the results. I fear, too, that I may seem censorious and unfair; and I earnestly crave pardon if I state unpalatable truths. But the alienation of

the people from the Christian Church seems to me to be due to three causes :—

(1) The drink habit.

(2) The caste system (I am speaking of England, not of India), and

(3) The want of preachers.

Now my observation leads me to the conclusion that of our population which is alienated from Christianity, a great proportion are in that condition owing to drink. I am not speaking of the half-million drunkards, who may be regarded as diseased, but I mean that many millions of our people deaden their spiritual nature by drink. In their leisure moments they are at the bar; drink is brought to them at their work; up to eleven or twelve on Saturday night they are at the public-house; on Sunday morning they have no inclination to worship; they only while away the day until the drink-shop opens again at six. They are narcotised against religious influences. God is out of their thoughts. The soul is ignored. If you find working people abstainers from drink you almost invariably find them religious. The Church and the public-house are alternatives. Men who choose one do not find themselves at the other. The drink trade has

obtained an extraordinary hold over our population; and its interest has recently been entrenched in an unassailable position. It is probably unconscious of the mischief it is doing, for the fumes of its own product stupefy its conscience. It is useless therefore to appeal to its mercy or to its sense of right. As long as it holds the country in its hand, and as long as our people yield readily to its seductions, we shall have these millions of people alienated from the higher life, and insensible to the claims of the soul and of God. There may be a dispute as to the proportion of the inmates of prisons, workhouses, and asylums who are there through drink; but I am persuaded that the proportion of those who are not in the churches owing to drink is far greater. If four-fifths of our population never worship, never do anything to promote Christ's cause, and pass away from earth without any hope of heaven—I say, *if* that is the proportion—I venture to say that three-fifths live as they do because of the influence, subtle and unobserved, which drink has upon them, and that if drink were out of the way the spiritual nature would awake in them, and they would, like others, begin to seek after God.

Putting the drink influence aside, I cannot but think that the next most serious hindrance to the Christian life of our working people is the curious caste feeling which pervades English society, and creeps into the Churches. I do not propose to enter into this fact at any length. It has been frequently handled and denounced. It is the destruction of brotherhood. A subtle class distinction keeps men apart. In the social hierarchy each grade suspects the cordiality of the one above it. A difference of manners and etiquette makes people in one grade think that they are slighted or insulted by people in another. They who have never waited for an introduction to mates cannot understand the attitude of those who have been brought up never to speak to others without being introduced. What in one grade is held to be refinement seems to another affectation. The courtesy of one rank seems coldness to another. The warmth and geniality which in one place are welcomed, elsewhere are thought to be ill-breeding. An immense proportion of the sober, well-meaning people who never go to church once went, and they gave up the practice because they were "not wanted," as they put it.

They inferred that they were not wanted because the social customs of other people did not give them the kind of welcome which they expected. The English caste system is most intricate, and is far more powerful than the similar system in India, and it has this disadvantage as compared with the Indian, that the caste here does not hold together, but chiefly establishes its identity and cohesion by contempt towards other castes. The castes among the working classes themselves are fearful and wonderful, and Church life is often destroyed by them. Capitalists can meet with workmen, employers with employed, more freely and effectually than some workmen can meet with one another. In England we have liberty, for which we thank God, but equality and fraternity are hardly understood.

The third reason for the alienation of the people from the Church is that we have not enough preachers. In that remarkable book *The Heart of the Empire*, the best things I know are said about preaching. There it is shown that wherever you have a preacher burning with his message, and delivering it as well as a good singer sings, or as a good writer writes, the people are eager to hear.

The indifference of the people to preaching is due to the fact that the preaching is indifferent. To address his fellow-men on religious subjects a man must be genuinely religious, and he must have some knowledge or faculty which entitles him to speak; in addition to this he must have the gift of ordered and convincing speech. Such men are in our day so few that the churches cannot be supplied. Sometimes there are whole parishes and even whole towns without a single preacher. Once the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed; now they do not look up—they only stay away.

I do not believe that the working people are alienated from the Church because it does not take up the questions of the Labour party or any other political organisation. No doubt they would be pleased if preachers and religious leaders entered more warmly into their aspirations, and were able to show more clearly how those aspirations grow out of the Christian Gospel. But from watching the working people who go to church, and noticing what really attracts them, I am convinced that they, like all other people, are drawn by the voice which speaks authentically about the soul, God,

and the supersensuous world; and they, like the rest, quickly weary of political and social questions presented to them in lieu of the good news which saves and redeems.

My practical conclusion is that the Church should seek a spiritual quickening like that which has visited Wales. Without this she will always be helpless and paralysed. When the awakening comes it will work many wonders; but among others it will

(1) Deal with the drink traffic.

(2) Break down the unbrotherly barriers of caste, and

(3) Raise up a company of preachers who can really preach the reconciling Word.

## IV

## By CANON BARNETT

Christianity may be defined as the Christian spirit incorporated in the Churches. When Christ baptized the world with that spirit, He made to glow in men their sense of relationship with God. The lowest man in Christ's presence felt this relationship, and knew himself as a new creature. The immediate effect of His life was therefore the formation of a society in which there was neither bond nor free and where all things were common. Christ's advent made a new creature and a new world. A great social change is indeed the unfailing sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit; a change which to some observers seems likely to turn the world upside down, to others to be almost reactionary, and which proves at last to be the beginning of a new era.

Such was the effect in the first century,

and such has again and again been the effect when the revelation of the Christian Spirit has stirred the inner life of man.

### The Eclipse of Faith

The Churches in which the Spirit is incorporated can hardly be said to have this effect. They do not even attract within their limits the mass of the people, whether they be labourers or capitalists. The people they do attract are often more zealous for opinions than for godliness, and are more keen that their particular organisation should have its rights and grow than that it should bear the fruits of the Spirit. Connection with a church has the power of lifting people above some vulgar vices, it gives them a purpose above trifles, and any form of zeal, even partisan zeal, has a cleansing power. The citizens who are members of some Christian community—notwithstanding their rivalries in such matters as the relief of the poor and education—are probably therefore the best citizens, but lately the fact has been brought home to us that only a minority belong to such communities. This is so far a matter for regret.

The point, however, which I desire to enforce is, that membership in a church does not seem necessarily to create that sense of relationship with God which is the fountain of personal and social change. Neither workmen nor capitalists, neither church-goers nor non-church-goers, can be said to be distinguished by faith. There may be "seven thousand" unknown who are worshipping God in spirit and in truth. The light shineth in the darkness, and its gleams are evident in many saintly and devoted lives. But confining our attention to the working classes, and judging them by their talk and actions, I think it may be agreed that faith is not their characteristic. Workmen as a class have the strength of character gained in the daily struggle with necessity, and the sympathy born of contact with sorrow and suffering, but they have little or no vision. They do not reach out to the best things which would satisfy human nature: they incline to think food the chief good, selfishness the one motive of action, and force the chief remedy. They are not conscious of a Divine inheritance, nor of the sin by which it is lost. They cannot be said to be moved by a force greater and

higher than themselves to generous action outside class conventions. They do not live as if they heard voices calling to the deeps of their being, and freeing them from the necessity to live by drink or pleasure or excitement. They have not the calm repose of men who are certain that their thoughts and hopes and policy rest on a rock. The working class as a class has not either spiritual energy or spiritual peace. Its advent to power in its present mind would be no security for the reign of goodwill. It would probably look after its rights as the propertied class has looked after its rights. It seems as if, like its predecessors, it would follow after comfort and make no adventure on the wide ocean of life.

When sometimes I review my long experience of East London, I conclude that the people are better mannered, better dressed, more respectable and more sober than the people of thirty years ago, but that they have less idealism—"less superstition" some one may interpose—yes, but the superstitions represented a grasp on the unseen and a consciousness of Divine relationship. The people of to-day are kind, but it is not because they must be so—driven

to it by the knowledge of a greater Kindness. They take more holidays, but they have not that gaiety which belongs to people who have joy in their own being and know that "all is well with the world."

Joy is perhaps the surest evidence of spiritual life. The eclipse of faith is evident in the cloud of dulness which is only broken by excitement—the dull lives and the dull policy of the working classes. The desertion of the Churches, and the somewhat undignified efforts of the Churches to attract congregations, are equally the outward signs of spiritual failing.

### The Reason of the Eclipse

The reason belongs probably to the time. The present is a transition time, in which old authorities are passing away while the new still linger on the horizon.

Thoughts no longer fit easily into old forms or language, and new pleasures are heaped on life's table which men have hardly yet learnt to enjoy. Thoughts, for instance, stirred by the waves of scientific discoveries, rise and fall in workmen's minds—they get little ex-

pression; but the workmen can no longer read their Bibles, say their prayers, or confess their belief as simply as their fathers did. The thoughts are in their minds,—doubts disturbing the clod,—but the thoughts have no name, and few are the worshippers who can be satisfied at the altar of the Unknown God.

The range of pleasures has at the same time marvellously extended. This generation has within its reach delights for the senses which may well seem enough for satisfaction, and working men naturally imagine that nothing can be better than to have a share in those delights. They go after these things that are seen, and have neither the time nor the will to go after the things which are unseen.

The reason of the eclipse is thus in the character of the time, in the new birth of thought which has followed the progress of science, and in the new gifts offered for every one's enjoyment. Men are not in revolt against the Churches either because they are ignorant of doctrines and ritual, or because they are naughty. They may be ignorant, but when the ignorance is removed and they are shown what the doctrines mean, they may be interested, but they

do not feel that they speak the thoughts of their hearts. They may be naughty, but it is not that naughtiness which keeps them out of the churches; their withdrawal may indeed be an effort to be true, a refusal to join in a service which might increase their reputation at the cost of their honesty.

The great symbols of faith are for the moment out of date. The brazen serpent is recognised to be a piece of brass. The Bible, the Church, the Sunday, the Creeds, the Services are seen to be other than they seemed. Symbols being in their nature dead, and thought being in its nature living, the symbols must from time to time be readapted to cover the new growth. These great symbols have not now the same relation to modern knowledge as they had to the knowledge of past generations. They are no longer, therefore, the powerful aids by which men's souls are brought into contact with the Highest they know. They drop out of regard "because," in workman language, "they are no use," and they will not come into regard until, faith reviving, men look around and find that no forms so well carry new thoughts as those which have taken shape during centuries

of history, and have again and again been adapted to the needs of new times.

The people of Hezekiah's time broke up the brazen serpent, and there are accretions about Christian symbols which must also be broken up. When workmen are less absorbed in the pursuit of material things they may begin to be Church reformers. Destruction is one side of creation, and there was faith in the men who broke down the beautiful forms of Christian art. Perhaps therefore it may be taken as a sign of progress that so many workmen revolt from the use of forms which they find to be of no use. The eclipse of faith may, if this review of its reason be true, be a cause not for alarm or for anger, but for watchfulness.

But if an eclipse of faith be a necessary moment in progress, there can be no satisfactory progress till faith again glows through life. The working man will hardly get to a land flowing with milk and honey unless he be driven by some more masterful force than his own selfishness. He will not with all his gettings be satisfied unless in the knowledge of life's capacity he gets also the intensity of life, the full joy of being and living. Without faith which reaches out to

the unseen good beyond the seen good, and to hope beyond hope's farthest gain, there is moral stagnation.

If East Londoners, for instance, knew a will which means good and which must be done; if they felt themselves in touch with that will so that they were quite certain what to do, and quite certain, too, that the best would follow their doings; if they realised the crown on the cross, the triumphant possibilities of sorrow; if they saw what to hope for and dared to hope,—they would get rid of their dulness, and reform the circumstances which now hinder the growth of body and mind. Many good gifts may be desired for East London, but that most to be desired is faith.

### The Way of Revival

The ways adopted for the revival of faith are a legion in number. Churches organise Missions; emotions are roused by means of music or mass meetings; appeals are made to fear and to love, so as to shake the people from their engrossment in material objects. Students meet the difficulties by able apologetics, and struggle in controversy with doubt. Devoted men and

women are daily spending themselves to save souls.

Criticism of such methods and such men and women is out of place. Faith is contagious, and they who have faith will spread faith whatever way they use. There is, however, one way which seems to me to escape sufficient attention. John the Baptist came on a transitional period not unlike the present. He prepared the way for a revival of faith by warning people to leave the evil they knew, and to do the good they knew. John's preaching is familiar. "Let those who recognise their brother's needs, act as their feelings dictate, and help their brother." "Let those who are in trade, and know what honesty means, be honest." "Let workmen who take wages for their work, see that they give the wages' worth." John thus threw the people on the right they knew to be right. He forced to the front the highest known level of duty. He planted people's feet firmly on the righteousness of the Law, so that they might rise into the higher righteousness of the Spirit. There were other leaders like Theudas, "giving himself out to be somebody," who tried to arouse emotions and passions; there were others, like the scribes, who

issued apologetics, so as to get acceptance for the doctrines of the Law; but John stands out as the successful example of a teacher who prepared the way of revival. He enforced those recognised duties deposited by the Law for whose use Judaism was the trustee. He opened the contents of Judaism. The prophets had seen that such a preparation is the unfailing condition of progress when they taught that Elijah always precedes the Messiah.

John's example has a modern application—Christianity—that is, the Churches in which the Christ spirit is incorporated, if they have not always the spirit which kindles spirit, they are yet the trustees for certain Christian actions which are now universally recognised as duties. They open to the world the contents of faith. It is, for instance, recognised that it is better to be unselfish than selfish, pure than impure, humble than proud, and gentle than violent, that thoughtfulness is better than ignorance, consideration above oppression, and public spirit above private seeking. There is a whole set of acts developed under Christian influence which are recognised as common morality but much neglected. The Churches, sending out

teachers who in modern times follow the example of John, would throw people on their recognised duties. This generation knows that it ought to study and seek after knowledge, that it is right to be clean and to promote cleanliness, that it is better to follow after peace than war. John-like teachers will be enthusiastic for education and for what is called "cold morality," and they will tell this generation to use their minds and do their duties.

Churches are therefore justified when they organise lectures and classes for the study of science and history, and call on people to think; when they promote agitations for securing the better health and ordering of the great towns; and when they "interfere in politics" for the sake of charity, justice, and peace. The Churches have done much in such directions—perhaps somewhat haltingly as if they were leaving their proper function; they might do much more if it were understood that by so doing they were preparing the way of the Spirit.

The Churches in regard especially to working men would probably commend themselves better if they took less pains to be attractive. Popular services, popular methods of address, the pro-

vision of entertainment and of poor relief, do not reach the needs which moved the multitude to go to John the Baptist in the wilderness, and are still moving in the hearts of working men. The bold rebuke of injustice, of oppression, and of mental indolence, whether in capitalists or in workmen, is what men would still go to the wilderness to hear, and the encouragement to seek knowledge and do their duties is what their innermost minds demand.

The Churches have not the reputation among working men such as John the Baptist had in his time. They might put more energy into a demand for the recognition in political and industrial life of the law of justice and mercy. They might dare to rebuke selfishness even if it took refuge under the name of a great political party, or a workman's organisation, or the cloak of patriotism.

The Churches might thus be enthusiastic for a higher morality, and at the same time devote more thought to their distinctive doctrines and ritual. The doctrines have to be adapted to the latest revelation of truth. The ritual has to be accommodated to growing tastes. They may not for the moment be much used, but

they must be kept up in their varied forms, so that when men desiring, after the way of St. Paul, to fulfil the highest law and failing, look around seeking aids they may find them ready. The teaching and the example of Churchmen keen for righteousness, jealous of their own opinions, and respectful to those of others, would be a new power among working men.

Organised action is naturally that most in evidence and that by which Christian activity is judged, but it has to be remembered that in the spread of living opinion, the action of individual Christians counts for more. The Churches, as organisations for teaching, would, I submit, be more effective if they were less known for their rivalry one with another, their controversies, and their anxiety to make proselytes, and more known for their enthusiasm for morality. But it is the conduct of the Christian next door, his behaviour in matters of business, his interest in goodness, his sweetness under loss, and his devotion to other's needs, which has power over men's minds. Individuals and not organisations have the greater responsibility. Christianity began among

twelve friends, and the safest movement is that which goes from one to one.

Christians—men and women of whom it can be said that they live in Christ and Christ in them—teach as they are moved by the Spirit. It is presumptuous to suggest to them a way of revival, but I would submit that a transition period in which men's minds are undergoing daily change is not one in which it is most expedient to rouse emotions by great promises, or to satisfy doubts by apologetics. The teachers who have tried these ways cannot be said to have had great success. Their claim reaches now to thousands and thousands of converts, but the presence of these converts is not felt in the world's life. They may be hidden out of sight, or they may, as members of a Christian society, have become more respectable and dutiful citizens, but the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, and meekness, is not evident in the public opinion which expresses itself through the press, or in political, industrial, and municipal action. Those ways do not seem to have led their converts into the reach of the Spirit, the unfailing sign of whose presence is a great social change. There is an eclipse of faith,

and it is not for any one to dictate where the Spirit will break through the darkness or what He will teach. We must not say Christ is here or there—in this phrase or that phrase —in this church or that church. Christ has always come from some despised Nazareth.

Revivals are not invented. "The Spirit bloweth where He listeth," men's heads are bowed, their lives are swept clean, but no one can tell whence He cometh. But however He comes, the Spirit carries with His breath the seeds and scents of the region over which He passes. He takes, that is to say, the form of the time—a different form for every age. Teachers do well, therefore, it seems to me, to restrain their haste, while like John they call on people to do the right they know. Christ will come in the form suited to His age: from the "yellow races" or a workman's club; from a Russian cottage or a scientific laboratory; from some centre often condemned by the respectable and religious as places from which cometh no good thing.

The teachers who best prepare the way of revival are those who have faith. The Churches who have that sense of relationship with God

which makes them put His service before any service of men will do most for men. The best teachers are men and women of prayer, who feel themselves sent to do their Father's work; but my point is that they do well to restrain their ardour to tell people the secret of their faith, while like John they first call on people to do the recognised right.

It may be irritating as a camel's-hair garment to meet the cry of people eager for a new heaven and a new earth with the order, "Study, think, search the Scriptures"; or with the old direction: "Be more sober; be cleaner; live purer lives; give your votes more thoughtfully; make your city more healthy and more seemly."

It may be as dangerous to popularity as was John's condemnation of Herod's "unhallowed tenderness," to oppose popular politics and popular habit with old appeals: "Be unselfish in your trade; consider other's needs; be generous to the stranger, the alien; be meek and not militant; be simple and not ostentatious."

It may be hard to be among those who "decrease that others may increase," but the way of John is justified by reason as by experience. The better future can only be built up out of

the best of the past. It is on the summit of the things known to be right—on the highest of every age that something higher must stand. This generation will hardly see the Christ through whom is oneness with God till it turns from the evil it knows, to do the good it knows.

Reason and experience thus unite to commend John's way of revival, and the teachers who follow him will enforce old recognised duties while they themselves wait and watch without haste and without rest.

## The Labour Movement

The Labour movement frankly disclaims any national policy. It stands neither for socialism nor for individualism; neither for a big England nor for a little England. Its object is simply the assertion of the rights of Labour to a larger share in the government of the community. Christianity, it seems to me, should be neither for nor against the movement.

Christianity may from one point be considered the trustee of certain established moral principles which grow out of the love of right

and the love of neighbours. It is not for or against any nation or party; it is for righteous and against unrighteous dealing, for an unselfish and against a selfish policy. It is bound to be against the luxury and selfishness of the property movement, which having secured the largest share in the Government has allowed one in twenty-five persons to become paupers, and infant mortality to reach its present height, while it has vastly increased its own expenditure on rare foods, on jewels, and on pleasure. It is bound to be against the uncharitableness which speaks hard things of the workman and believes no good of an agitator or of a Trades Unionist. But it is equally bound to be against the mental indolence, the narrow views, the selfish isolation, and the class arrogance of the Labour movement. Capital and Labour has each its own temptations. Labour by its conditions is saved from some errors but is opened to others, and the poor are not essentially better than the rich. The "cares of this life" equally with "the deceitfulness of wealth" choke the good seed.

Christianity, as Robertson says, "binds up men in a holy brotherhood. But what are the

best institutions and surest means for arriving at this brotherhood it has not said. In particular, it has not pronounced whether competition or co-operation will secure it. It is not sent into this world to establish monarchy or secure the franchise, to establish socialism or to frown it into annihilation; but to establish a charity and a moderation, and a sense of duty and a love of right, which will modify human life according to any circumstances that can possibly arise."

Christianity cannot thus be for or against the Labour movement, but it must welcome the appearance of any new development, be it of Labour or of Nationality, or of Learning or of Art. Humanity is growing, and signs of growth are good to see, as in the old world it was good to see the Israelites shaking themselves free of Egypt and asserting their freedom as a nation. Labour is now shaking itself free of its Egypt and asserting its right to be. Its first movements may be vague or extravagant, but from the Christian point of view, which takes in a humanity raised to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," it is good to see another member of the human family growing and living.

Christianity must, therefore, help the Labour movement to make its way, by calling on the Pharaohs of the day to treat it with justice and consideration. It must try to secure for it not favour but the fair play which is required by the Christian principles, and at the same time it must be faithful to warn working men that they themselves do not offend Christian principles. "Get me a share of the inheritance," claimed the defrauded brother. "Who made Me a divider?" Christ answered; and added, "Beware of covetousness." Christianity, following this example, has not to come as a divider between Labour and Capital, but it has to say to both, "Beware of covetousness."

Christianity is tempted to patronise the Labour movement. Neglect is safer. The patron in the end depends on the client, and his favours do not secure lasting respect. Patrons, like ostentatious givers, gain their rewards in the present and have no part in the future. Christianity as a patron of the Labour movement and inclining to take lenient views of its faults, would lose the position which would enable it to make the new giant, Labour,

behave less like a giant than its predecessor, Capital, has behaved.

The right attitude of Christianity to Labour would seem to be that taken by the highest moral force,—above all parties, claiming right for all and favour for none, cherishing everywhere the smoking flax of good, and rebuking equally any offence against justice and charity.

## V

### By ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

There are those associated with the Churches who deny the estrangement of work-people from organised Christianity, but the more thoughtful members of the Churches are realising that not only does this alienation exist, but that it is growing. I have had favourable opportunities, owing to my close association with the workers in different parts of the country, to learn the true position. After the most careful observation and reflection, I am forced to the conclusion that the vast majority of our wage-earners are at present outside the various branches of the Christian Church. This experience is corroborated by such eminent authorities as Mr. Charles Booth in his *Life and Labour in London*; the *Daily News Religious Census of London*; and Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree in his book on *Poverty*.

Mr. Booth concludes his investigations with the following summary: "That great section of the population which passes by the name of the working classes, lying socially between the lower middle class and the poor, remains as a whole outside all the religious bodies, whether organised as churches or as missions."

The editor of the *Daily News Religious Census of London* states the position in the following terms: "In Greater London, with a population of 6,246,336, only 1,252,433 are regular worshippers; or, in other words, four persons out of every five are non-attenders at the various churches."

Mr. Rowntree states that in York only fifteen per cent of the population are church-goers.

I have said that the more thoughtful members of the Churches realise the gravity of the position. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the great Anglican and Free Church Conferences, where the subject has received prominent attention. At the Manchester Conference of Free Churches recently, it was brought before the representatives by Dr. R. F. Horton, Dr. Clifford, Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, and others, and it was clearly demonstrated that the majority present

had become conscious of the growing alienation between the various Churches and the working class.

Here, then, is an admitted defect in our national religious life, and even could we satisfy ourselves that it was but temporary, we must nevertheless deplore its existence. If it should, by any means, be made permanent, and result in a final and complete separation between these two great forces, then in my opinion its effect would be disastrous to all concerned.

We are sometimes told that the alienation is entirely due to the wickedness of men's hearts. I do not agree with this conclusion, though I am prepared to admit that in this respect working men are not unlike their so-called social superiors. Many of them love to have their fling. Nor is it to be wondered at, especially when we remember that they are the creatures of an environment which does not tend in the direction of strengthening their moral fibre. Crushed and disheartened, they have often plunged into the vortex of evil as a means of relieving themselves from the awful squalor and wretchedness of their surroundings.

Is the alienation due to the workers becoming

permeated with the teachings of agnosticism or infidelity? So far as my experience entitles me to speak, I can find no evidence of a general desire amongst the workers to repudiate the principles of Christianity in order to accept those set forth by Mr. Robert Blatchford in his *Clarion* articles, or in *God and My Neighbour*. There is, undoubtedly, a considerable section amongst the working classes, especially amongst those most active in Socialist and Labour propaganda, who rightly hold Mr. Blatchford in high esteem. This, however, is on account of his position as a politician, and especially as a very able exponent of Labour politics and Socialism. Amongst those actively engaged in these efforts for promoting the common good—efforts constantly approved by Mr. Blatchford—are many who have the highest respect and admiration for the pure self-sacrificing life and the lofty principles of Christ, but who are not in close association with orthodox Christianity as represented by the Churches.

There are among the most self-respecting and honest of our workmen those who refuse to come into line with the Churches because they feel there is so much associated with the Churches

that acts as a constant reminder of the social distinctions between them and the ordinary church-goer. Some of our churches are little better than religious hothouses for the preservation of the interests of middle-class society. Working men and their families have had painful experiences which have made impressions upon their minds never to be erased, and it is no uncommon thing to hear them relate instances of religious exclusiveness, telling how when they have entered these middle-class preserves and occupied a seat, they have been officially told they could not remain, as it was the seat of Mr. So-and-So. They have considered the many professions of love bestowed upon the poor, but remembering such incidents of religious snobbery, they have rightly concluded that such people could not love them, or there could never be such a divergence between their profuse promises and the actual performance. Thus they turn away in disgust, concluding that they are not the plants which these churches have to preserve.

This want of assimilation between the principles of Christ and the practices of many of His professed followers has made a very

deep impression upon the minds of the working classes, and forces from them the verdict: "If this is religion, then I'm not having any of it, for if these people get to heaven I won't be far away."

Then, again, the want of sympathy on the part of the Churches with the new aspirations and ideals dominating the workers has undoubtedly been one of the leading causes of the alienation. With the quickening of the workers' conscience, inspiring them with new hope, new enthusiasm, and new energy to labour for the Golden Age of social betterment, they have failed to recognise in the efforts of the Churches that sympathetic co-operation which they were justified in expecting. The Churches have not appreciated the real meaning and true inwardness of many of the movements which the workers themselves have initiated and developed for their social and industrial amelioration. Hence these movements have been treated with critical aloofness or active opposition until such times as they have become strong and have received the stamp of popular approval. Then the attitude of organised Christianity has changed, and these same movements have received an overdose of

fulsome religious patronage, not because they had become more just, but more popular.

The absence of a true Christian ideal has been a powerful factor in influencing the working-class mind. The masses have looked on and seen the Churches make it their business to care for the spiritual and moral wants of the community. They have seen provision made amongst their members for the cultivation and development of devout feeling and the higher Christian graces. We would not underestimate the importance of these things, but when it results in many otherwise good people limiting the application of the principles of Christ to a section of their life instead of applying it to every department, then it becomes objectionable.

If members of the Churches use Christianity in this way, presenting a caricature to the world instead of the real Christ, they cannot wonder that the masses of the people get the impression that religion is not adapted to their rough-and-tumble life in this workaday world. This gospel of other-worldliness will never satisfy the needs of the people, and it is this want of a true Christian ideal that has led to the alienation of the working classes from the Churches

and strengthened the ranks of distressing indifferentism, deadly materialism, and doleful pessimism. Not until Christianity is shown in its real nature as an aggressive force, destroying the evil of the individual life, transforming the character of the workers' environment, taking cognisance of social defects, seeking to right industrial wrongs and remove the injustices under which the workers suffer, will it command the sympathies of the common people.

The attitude of the Churches towards social questions has been a powerful element in creating the present situation. We know of nothing in the Churches' history which is so difficult to comprehend as its unwillingness to take its rightful position, and accept its full responsibility for dealing adequately with the deep social wounds from which the masses of the people suffer. That they possess knowledge of the existence of these social sores is evident from the efforts, more or less of a spasmodic character, they have made to give relief by way of opening soup kitchens, or doling out coal or blankets, instead of using their vast resources and magnificent opportunities, and going to the root of the evil by attacking the system which makes misery and

wretchedness possible in the richest country in the world. It appears to me a strange conception of the purpose of Christianity which moves the Churches to become concerned about saving the people from the future hell of their wrong-doing, but allows them to remain unconcerned regarding those social anomalies which largely contribute to the making of the present hell of the people's environment.

Can we wonder, then, that from such a miserable representation of Christianity the masses turn with loathing, and declare they want nothing to do with such empty platitudes and vague generalities—a Christianity which has no condemnation for their oppressors, but even exalts them to high office; which has no disturbing influence for those guilty souls in the Churches who have bolstered up monopolies resulting in cruel social exactions and industrial tyrannies?

What means can the Churches adopt to prevent the alienation of the working classes from becoming permanent? However much we admit that a remedy is needed, it will be obvious that the Churches cannot support any or every proposal suggested as a means for delivering us from the difficulty. It is, however, gratifying

to find the Churches displaying universally a spirit of inquiry. This changed attitude of the Churches is doubtless due to the fact that in late years there has been a growing consciousness that all was not right in our social system, and the Churches have become increasingly conscious of their responsibility. If the inquiry has to result in the removal of the causes of working-class estrangement, it must be definite and deep, and be accompanied with a spirit of determination to remove these causes at all costs, and thus secure the reconciliation of the masses to the Christianity of the Christ.

It would be well if the Churches in undertaking a task of such magnitude would at the beginning consider how far their failure to reach the people has been due to the imperfections of existing Church organisations.

I would ask: Is Christianity as we have it represented to-day, split up as it is into almost innumerable denominational Churches, capable of adequately dealing with the growing forces of reaction? "United we stand, divided we fall," is as true of Churches as of other organisations. They may continue to exist in form, but their influence as a force making for righteousness in

the earth, in captivating the hearts and minds of the common people, is neutralised by their divisions. However much Christians may console themselves that a Church divided into numerous sects is justified and, as many think, a source of strength, the multitude is slow to believe in a Christianity so divided. Many work-people when conscious of the causes of such divisions, repudiate Christianity altogether. Can we wonder that the enemy goes from conquest to conquest, and that the Churches have to mourn the alienation of the common people, who heard their Master gladly?

Is it not time to inquire whether the polity and methods of the Churches are in harmony with present-day requirements. Great developments have taken place in late years in the direction of bringing national and local administrative life more into harmony with the democratic ideal. It has been made a great deal easier for the workman to interest himself in public affairs. The County Council, the Borough Council, and the Urban and Rural District Councils on the one hand, and the Board of Guardians on the other, have opened new channels of usefulness for his services to the Commonweal. Hundreds

of our workmen are also taking part in judicial administration on our Borough Benches, and the great national Conferences of the Trade Union, Co-operative, and Friendly Society movements are almost entirely the outcome of working-class effort. The Labour Representation movement, with its million members contributing to a common Parliamentary Fund, is opening out the way for the worker to take a larger part in our national affairs, and succeeding Parliamentary elections will result in the larger number of working-men members being returned to St. Stephen's. It is generally admitted that the community as a whole is all the better for this increased activity of the workers in these national and local movements.

What have the Churches done to come into line with the aspirations of the majority of the people? It may be answered that the annual conferences of the different denominations are constantly legislating for this purpose. Yes, none will deny that they make an attempt; but, in the great majority of cases, the most essential element is altogether lacking. In the past, working men have been conspicuous by their absence from our national Church Courts, not because

they were uninterested in Church work, for they have given evidence of their earnestness by doing the spade work for years. The two chief reasons are, first, because their economic condition precludes them from making the journey to Church conferences and supporting themselves during their attendance; and, secondly, if they should be able to meet the expense, it is the general rule that the middle classes prefer to elect one of themselves as a representative. The movements enjoying public popularity to-day derive their inspiration from the people, while I am afraid the Churches have failed to attract the masses because they lack the power that alone is derived from direct contact with the common people themselves.

How important it is, then, that the Churches should come into line with the democratic tendency of the times. Like their Master, they should get so close to the people as to enable them to view their needs with a sympathetic eye and be moved with compassion for them. They should strive earnestly to understand the real nature and true aspirations of the democracy.

Hitherto democracy has been looked upon by many people in the Churches as something

American and not to be desired. They have thought of it as an instrument of jobbery and corruption, and, though during the past quarter of a century the spirit of democracy has grown rapidly in our midst, it is astonishing how little the Churches know of its real nature. With Dr. Johnson it is necessary for us to say, "Clear your mind of cant!"

Others have thought of democracy in the words of the late President Lincoln, who described it as "Government of the people, for the people, by the people." Democracy, however, means much more than a form of government.

On one occasion a speaker was sneeringly asked what he meant by democracy. He replied: "It is a sentiment not to be appalled, corrupted, or compromised; it knows no baseness, it cowers at no danger, it oppresses no weakness; destructive only of despotism, it is the sole conservator of Liberty.

"Democracy represents the great principle of progress, it is onward and upward in its movements. It has a heart for action and motives for a world. It has confidence in man and an abiding reliance in his high destiny.

"It seeks the largest liberty, the greatest good, and the surest happiness. It aims to build up the great interests of the many to the least detriment of the few. It remembers the past, but does not neglect the present; and it establishes the present without fearing to provide for the future. It cares for the weak without permitting injustice to the strong."

Mazzini asked: "What is the democratic movement but an attempt at a practical realisation of the prayer, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth'? We are labouring that the development of human society may be as far as possible in the likeness of the Divine society, in the likeness of the heavenly country where all are equal, where there exists but one love, one happiness for all. The law of God has no two weights and measures: Christ came for all, He spoke to all, He died for all. We cannot wish the children of God to be equal before God and unequal before man.

"We cannot admit that instead of loving one another like brethren, men may be divided, hostile, selfish, jealous—city of city, nation of nation. We protest, then, against all oppres-

sion, wherever it is practised, for we acknowledge no foreigners, we recognise only the just and the unjust, the friends and the enemies of the law of God. This forms the essence of what men have agreed to call the Democratic Movement."

Surely this high ideal, this common love, this common activity, this common cause for a common humanity, is in strict harmony with the teaching of the "Son of Man." Did He not teach the lawyer that neighbourliness consisted of love, energy, sacrifice, unrestricted by either creed or nationality, for the alleviation of pain, and the uplifting of those pressed down by injustice and wrong?

There are those in the community prepared to admit the high ideals of democracy, whether they are applied in the form of government, of a state, or of a society. They say they would willingly accept it could they only be assured that the people were sufficiently advanced in morals and education to receive it.

Whatever there is to be said in support of such a position—and we are free to admit there is something—we claim that this should not be the attitude of the Churches. For however

much we may admit the possibility of danger arising from the general distribution of power amongst the people, the Churches should be concerned more with that upon which the stability of democracy depends than with its dangers. They should seek to permeate it with moral experience, and give it that stimulus and guidance which tend to the development of its ethical character.

For, after all, the stability of democracy depends, first, upon the acceptance by the many of guidance from those morally qualified to give it, and secondly, upon the activity of those morally superior.

Such then is the duty of the Churches. They should enter into the democratic spirit of the times, and be prepared to plan and guide the future development of this new movement. The most able men of the Churches should give themselves up more than they have ever done to study democratic tendency, and even at the sacrifice of personal comforts and ambitions they should keep in closest touch with democratic life.

Just as the patriot is willing to lay down his life for his country, so the Christian citizen must

be willing to sacrifice convenience and business advantages to the necessity of securing and maintaining an efficient system of social order more in harmony with the Divine economy. The Church should hail the dawn of the new spirit among the people, bidding them to go forward and possess the land, giving from its best leaders to democracy, and using its vast resources to break down every barrier that impedes the onward march of progress to a brighter and more unselfish life.

Then the Churches must consider their responsibility concerning the great social problems with which the nation is confronted. It is obvious that as the consciousness of the community expands, our social defects can and must be remedied, and the Churches can no longer afford to neglect their due share in the work of social amelioration. The just settlement of social problems is a matter of public well-being and of the greatest national import. The longer the existence of social evils is sanctioned the graver will they become and the more difficult their solution.

In a brief paper such as this it is impossible to enumerate at length the many defects of our

social life, but among the existing evils that threaten the soundness of our national life to-day may be included the continuance of an industrial system based on unrestricted competition, creating millionaires on the one hand, and unemployment, poverty, and absolute pauperism on the other. Then there is the physical deterioration of our people occasioned by the overcrowded condition of their lives, the unhealthy circumstances of their labour, producing badly nourished and underfed children, who, later in life, have to bear on their weak shoulders the burden of industry. Worse than all, perhaps, from the point of view of the moral, physical, and intellectual interests of the nation, is the spectacle of our child-workers and the victims of the sweating-shop and miserably-paid home work.

To solve these problems the Churches must put forward their best energies. Far too long have they neglected to preach the social meaning of the Gospel of Christ. Inside the Churches the cry "No Politics" has been constantly raised, and yet, outside, Church members have been the strongest supporters of "Party." Social problems of the character I have named

have been looked upon as coming within the political sphere, and hence they have been left severely alone by the non-political Churches. Possessed of only a very superficial knowledge of the question, the Churches, for instance, have concluded that unemployment was mainly due to intemperance, pauperism the result of thriftlessness, and like the Priest and the Levite they have passed by on the other side.

I admit freely that, primarily, the mission of the Churches is to redeem the world and bring peace to the individual soul through surrender to Christ, but the exclusive concern of the Churches should not be with a future state of existence. Rather should they be concerned with this world. Their mission should be to bring to pass *here* a kingdom of righteousness and peace, and to carry redemption into our social relationships. For it must never be forgotten that converted sinners and edified saints are the subjects of a social and economic environment which acts everlastingly upon their moral and spiritual condition.

Having regard, then, to the relations between the moral and spiritual and the social and economic conditions, how essential it is

that the Churches should ever be seeking to regulate, humanise, and change environment for the promotion of the common good! Recognising the common good as the true Christian guide in social and economic progress, they should assist as far as practicable in creating laws and institutions, not for the continuance of vested interests or selfish monopolies, but with an eye fixed steadily on the promotion of the common good.

We Labour men are not unmindful of the vast amount of effort the Churches are making: visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowing. What we deplore is the fact that coincident with such relief the Churches have not attempted to get at the root-cause of all the evil and distress. If they would display the same amount of energy in seeking to eradicate from our collective life the evil it contains, that they have shown in seeking to deliver the individual life from sin, there would have been less call for their relief work. The people are longing as never before to be delivered from oppressive social anomalies, and if only the Churches would bring their vast and varied machinery to operate against these

evils much might be accomplished, and the gratitude and co-operation of the multitude secured.

I would appeal to the Churches to face these problems seriously, to present to the world a more humane, comprehensive, and practical Christianity, and seek to demonstrate its adaptability to every phase of human existence.

When the Churches bring themselves into harmony with the democratic spirit of the times, when they seek to destroy the great social defects of our day and demonstrate the adaptability of Christianity to the complete chapter of human life, then will the estranged masses be drawn nearer. When the common people see the real Christ in place of the caricature, then will the attractive power of that great Personality appeal to them, and under His regenerating influence the individual life as well as the collective life will become purified, and the city of God nearer realisation, as the result of the reconciliation of the people to Christianity.

## VI

## By SILAS K. HOCKING

It appears to be generally assumed that the masses of the people are not only religiously indifferent, but are in a condition of absolute antagonism to Christianity. This assumption I believe to be false. That antagonism exists there can be no doubt—widespread and invincible—but it is not to Christianity, but to the Church. Rightly or wrongly there is a growing belief among thoughtful working men that the Church has ceased to represent Christianity—that the candlestick has been removed; that the cisterns are broken, and will hold no water.

How far this belief has any foundation in fact is a subject that will have to be inquired into. For while the masses of the people continue to believe that the Church as it exists to-day is a mere coterie of respectable people who are willing to pay for what they like, and who would

resent the intrusion of the unwashed throng into their midst, the antagonism will not only remain, but will intensify.

The interest in religion is as deep and widespread as it ever was. Nothing can kill it. Religion is not a creed, it is an instinct of the soul. It is the warp and woof of life, and we can no more shed it than we can shed our hands and feet. We may shed our beliefs, lose faith in the shibboleths that we once lisped with tenderest reverence, and become fiercely antagonistic to the growing assumptions of priests, but that need not imply any disregard for religion, or any loss of reverence for Christ or His teachings.

Some time ago on Tower Hill a crowd of men flung up their caps when the name of Jesus Christ was mentioned, and shouted Hurrah! But at the mention of the word "Church" a sneer curled their lips. Such straws show which way the wind blows. Jesus of Nazareth they believe in. He was a man among men; a friend of publicans and sinners. He espoused the cause of the poor, championed the downtrodden and oppressed, showed mercy to the sinning and degraded, and manifested an infinite pity for humanity which culminated in the Cross.

Moreover, they admire His teachings. The brotherhood of man appeals to them. The golden rule pictures the highest and noblest in human conduct; the plea for unselfishness and non-resistance touches their heart and wins their assent. It may be something far above them—an ideal which glitters like a star, and which they can never hope to reach; nevertheless, deep down in their hearts there is a profound and indestructible reverence for Christ and His gospel.

Infidelity as understood a generation ago scarcely exists to-day.

This does not mean, of course, that those who cheered Mr. Bradlaugh have taken to going to church and chapel, for such is not the case. Statistics of Church attendances show a steady decline. Notwithstanding the multiplication of ecclesiastical agencies, the proportion to the population of those attending church and chapel is less than it was five-and-twenty years ago.

But does this mean antagonism to Christianity? I do not think so. That there may be indifference it were idle to deny. But how far that indifference extends it is impossible to say. Men do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves.

Because they are silent that is no proof that they are thoughtless. Religion is too sacred a thing to be paraded before the crowd. I have known people who could not be got to talk about their dead. So there are people who are always silent about religion—that is, religion as it relates to themselves.

But, speaking generally, I am bound to confess that after a fairly extended experience I have found very few people who in any true sense were indifferent to the deeper questions of religion I have found crowds of men who would sneer at the Churches, and curse the parsons, and pour scorn on the average deacon or church-warden, and yet who believed intensely in Jesus Christ, and in His Sermon on the Mount. Get them apart, and they will talk with the deepest interest and seriousness on the eternal problems of sin, and forgiveness, and retribution, and immortality. Hence I am not sure that the assumption that the masses of the people are even *indifferent* to religion can be sustained. In the secular press few subjects are followed with keener interest than those which relate to the deeper questions of human life and destiny. The story of the Welsh Revival has been followed

with the profoundest sympathy, especially by the working classes of this country, while further indirect testimony is to be found in the interest taken in the doings of spiritualists and Christian scientists.

If we turn to the witness of the press, what do we find? It is not the problem novel, or the novel of doubtful morality that is most in vogue. The widest circle of readers is for the novel with a religious tendency. The same is very largely true of periodicals. I question if any class of weekly paper has a larger vogue than those devoted to what is termed "Sunday reading," and they circulate mainly among the poorer classes of the community. I say nothing of the literary quality of these periodicals, nor would I like to be held responsible for their theological teaching. Nevertheless, the fact that they circulate by hundreds of thousands—if not by millions—every week is surely some indication of the widespread, if not universal, interest in religious things.

Hence I repeat that the assumption that the masses of the people are antagonistic to Christianity is not borne out by facts. The facts, in my judgment, point to an opposite conclusion. The opposition is to a worldly, selfish, and some-

times crafty ecclesiasticism that has usurped the place of Christianity, and to a morbid and often farcical religiosity that is made to do duty for religion.

The all-essential thing to-day is for the "Church," so called, to be converted to Christianity. When that is accomplished there will be no more talk about the alienation of the masses, or the antagonism of the working man. It is just because the Church has lost its hold upon Christ that it has lost its hold upon the people. The people are not fools. There are few of them who have not wit enough to distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit, between what Christ was and taught, and what is being taught and acted to-day in His name.

Christianity stands for brotherhood and humanity. That is a postulate I presume no one will call into question. But can it be said with any regard for the meaning of words that the Church as an ecclesiastical organisation stands for these things? Has it ever stood for these things since in the early centuries it became corrupted by paganism? It is scarcely more than a generation ago that the Church defended slavery, and the pulpit openly denounced those who had

the courage to say that God meant the negro to be free. The anti-slavery movement grew up—not inside the Church, but outside, as also most temperance organisations have done. To-day, in America, the negro is scarcely tolerated in the white man's church, while in South Africa the white Christian elbows his black brother off the pavement.

In Christian England the Church, whether Free or Established, is becoming more and more the sacred preserve of the well-to-do. The ambition to erect costly and imposing sanctuaries has necessitated a heavy financial strain upon the worshippers. In too many instances no poor need apply. The pew rents are prohibitive as far as the working classes are concerned, while the costly attire of the fashionable worshippers effectually bars the entrance of the shabbily dressed man or woman. Most people have a feeling when entering a strange church that they are doing so on sufferance, and sit on tenter-hooks for the first half-hour, fearing that the owner of the pew, into which they have been shown, may put in an appearance and frown anathemas on them for occupying a place they have not paid for.

For my own part, I regard pews and pew rents as distinctly anti-Christian. They foster class distinctions. They keep the poor at a distance. They encourage snobbishness, and give point to the sneer that the Churches only want those who are able to pay.

It is the sheerest hypocrisy to rail at the working classes for keeping aloof from the Church while we deliberately encourage and foster a system which keeps them at arm's-length and practically tells them that they are not wanted. Until the barriers of caste are broken down by the Church itself, and our sanctuaries made as free as the Gospel proclaimed within their walls is supposed to be, we may go on passing resolutions to the end of the chapter, but the masses will remain where they are to-day.

The other points might be considered with advantage. Christianity stands for peace and goodwill towards men. That is a proposition which, in the abstract at any rate, I presume no one will dispute. But does the Church stand for these things? We know it does not. It defends war to-day with as much passion and zeal as it defended slavery a century ago. To

the Church's eternal disgrace it must be said that the movements in favour of peace and arbitration—like the movements in favour of temperance and the abolition of slavery—have grown up outside the Church. The Church has allied itself with the man of blood in all Christian countries. In fact, war is tacitly regarded as a Christian institution. It has its recognised place in our rota of prayers. We send out our chaplains to the battlefield to encourage and console the fighters. We get pious prelates to bless our war-ships and other implements of destruction. We offer public thanksgiving to Heaven when we have worsted our enemy. We even train boys in our churches to be little soldiers, and teach them the jargon of the military camp. We crowd our principal cathedrals with monuments erected to the memory of those who spent their lives in shedding their brothers' blood.

Hence if we do not regard war as a Christian institution, how do we regard it? Certainly not as an anti-Christian institution. General Jackson said, "War is Hell"; and any one who has followed the struggle between Russia and Japan, or our own recent struggle in South Africa, must feel that the epithet is well applied. And

yet the Church goes on approving Hell and giving it its benediction.

No doubt it is quite true that the Church every now and then passes pious resolutions in favour of peace and arbitration. But they mean nothing and come to nothing. Here and there a few ministers are to be found who have the courage to point out what ought to be the Church's attitude on this great question, but they are usually regarded as cranks and treated as of no account. At Christmas-tide zealous young women decorate the churches with evergreens, and display in some conspicuous place the motto, "On earth peace, goodwill toward men," but no one takes much account of it. If there should happen to be a war on at the time, the motto is kept out of sight.

As a matter of fact, the Church has become the bond-slave of the State, not only in England, but in all Christian countries. Hence whatever villainies rulers may perpetrate, the Church is expected to bless; and she does bless, and does not even pull a wry face over it.

But how does all this tell on the great mass of people outside the Church? Do we imagine that they do not think? that they are in-

capable of putting two and two together? They may not chose to be bound by the teachings of Christianity themselves, but they do expect that those who profess and teach Christianity will be bound by its teachings.

To the plain man in the street the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth on this question is beyond dispute: it is love and brotherhood and humanity; it is peace and mercy and good-will. He realises intuitively, without any interpretation of priests, that the whole spirit and genius of the Gospel is opposed to strife and war and bloodshed; that to settle a dispute by killing your neighbour is not, and cannot be, in harmony with the teaching of Jesus; and that whatever the non-Christian may do, the Christian man has no right to take the life of his brother to gain his own ends.

Hence when he sees the Church deliberately turning its back on the teaching of its Founder; when he hears of ministers of the gospel of peace openly advocating war; when he reads of bishops of the Church saying that it is impossible to run a State on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount,—he grows sick, as a working man expressed himself to me, and

imagines that he can be a better Christian outside the Church than in it.

This is the position of thousands of sober, intelligent working men to-day. They are not antagonistic to Christianity. They believe in it and admire it. Their antagonism is to the hybrid thing that struts about in its clothes.

Hence the first thing to be done is for ministers and deacons and Church officials of all kinds to make a sincere and honest attempt to bring the Church into line with the ethic of the New Testament. We might let dogma look after itself for a while. Creeds and ceremonials would suffer no harm if given a little rest. We have wasted so much time in fighting about "anise and cummin" that we might turn with advantage to the weighter matters of the Law.

The idealism of the New Testament is no doubt a hard road to travel. Moreover, the Church, if a Divine institution, is also a human. The treasure is in earthen vessels. The best of men are only men at the best, and the most praiseworthy efforts often end in comparative failure. But that is no reason why we should fold our arms and drift with the tide.

Christianity stands for great ethical ideals.

If the Church will not attempt in its corporate life to exemplify these ideals, then it is bound to fail. Better it should fail. Honesty outside the Church is infinitely to be preferred to hypocrisy inside.

While Christianity means one thing and Churchism means another,—while Christ enunciated great principles which His ambassadors are silent upon,—it is in vain we complain of the alienation of the working classes or any other class.

When the Church begins to teach and to practice Christianity in sober earnest the people will come again.

## VII

## By BRAMWELL BOOTH

We of the Salvation Army do not believe that the British working men are, as a class, any more antagonistic to religion in general and Christianity in particular than any other class. In fact, we think that the religious activities of the country warrant us in arriving at a stronger conclusion. What other class can show such an array of workers in the direct service of God as they? The great army of Sunday School teachers in the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches is largely recruited from the ranks of working men and women. The life and hope of the Christian Endeavour, Young People's Guilds, and similar movements spring from the working classes. The most popular preachers in the country—if influence and numbers are signs of popularity—depend on the same class for their support. The moral

and religious backbone of our average English village is composed of hard-toiling men with their wives and families; and when we read of moral and religious teachers of the people talking as though the working classes were synonymous with infidelity, political disorder, and social disruption, we despair for the progress of the Christian graces within the walls of the sanctuary. Fustian is as sacred in the sight of God as broadcloth. A working man in his way is as much a philosopher as the doctor of law and logic is in his. He has progressed educationally, politically, and, we contend, religiously, as no other class has done during the past fifty years.

But to return to evidence. What a standing rebuke to the smallness of our faith in the working man are the local preachers, mission workers, and exhorters! Hear them among their fellows, in the squares, market-places, and waysides, preach of salvation and righteousness —what does it represent and portend? See them travel, as they do, thousands and tens of thousands of miles on the Sabbath to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ: is not that fact convincing evidence of a powerful leaven among

the people, and suggestive of even far greater developments?

Then, no student of the progress of Christianity among the people surely can fail to be inspired with new faith as to the future of the Salvation Army. It is an Army from its front to its rear ranks made up of working people. There is a common and erroneous notion that the wearers of the Blood and Fire regalia are all converted drunkards, thieves, and ne'er-do-weels. While it is true that there is scarcely a corps without a proportion of these classes, reformed and regenerated, the proportion is so small—I was going to add unfortunately far too small—to the total number of Salvationists, that the uninitiated are apt to do the Army an injustice, and fail to grasp one of its main encouragements to the Church of Christ of to-day. It is a working-man's Church, with a working-man's ritual, and a working-man's clergymen—and clergywomen! Lose faith in the power of Christianity, forsooth! How could we, in the presence of such facts as these?—

Ninety-five per cent of the male officers of the Salvation Army were formerly mechanics, operatives, and labourers.

Fifteen thousand of the Army's instrumentalists—large numbers of them worthy from the standpoint of ability to stand side by side with Municipal Bands—practically to a man belong to the working classes, and not only give their arduous service gratuitously to the Army, but pay for their own music and repairs of instruments, as well as contribute to the general funds of their organisation.

Fifty thousand local officers, largely drawn from the same ranks, render voluntary service in the religious instruction of the young, the financial and spiritual oversight of corps, the visitation of the sick and the poor, and the selling of healthy Salvation literature in public-houses, etc.

The freewill and self-denying offerings of the ordinary Salvationist are perhaps one of the most striking testimonies in the present day of the practical influence of Christ's teaching of love for others to be found among the common people.

Here, then, we have something tangible, from which we may at least deduce the encouragement that, if results such as these can be accomplished within so short time, and by such instrumentality, what may we not hope to realise if similar faith and enthusiasm are devoted to the

Christianisation of the working classes by other means and other agents?

But we find our chief source of optimism as to the future relationship of the working man to Christ, not so much in the vast organisation of these forces for the general evangelisation of the masses, as in the type of man and woman which has been brought into being by the Army. We have a complaint to make as to the P.S.A. (which is principally a working man's affair) and kindred efforts for the moral and religious improvement of the people. While aiming at drawing the people away from an unworthy use of their time on Sunday afternoons, it lacks that definiteness of conditions in its membership which are so essential to the making of manly, out-and-out followers of Christ. The movement is *too* pleasant. It lacks that moral vitality that *compels* men not merely to renounce the baser forms of idleness, but to come to God for a definite work of grace. Christianity implies a moral revolution, a conversion, and it is because we see few signs of this arm of the Church working definitely towards this goal that we fear it will fail to satisfy many who view it with great hope. Now,

without the slightest desire to blow the trumpet of the organisation with which we are associated, we submit that the type of man and woman which the Army is raising up constitutes a most valuable lesson to the Church of Christ in its quest after a more efficient way of winning the working classes for Christ, as well as a factor that makes for faith and righteousness.

If a man makes a bold stand for Christ in a mine, shipyard, or factory, he is at once marked. His act is equal to a challenge to his fellows, and until he has established his testimony by his walk and conversation—often a long and tedious work—he will meet with little encouragement. His workmates will not readily admit a reason or excuse for the slightest lapse; and should he, under the stress of temptation, become a backslider, the effect is equal to a disaster to the cause of Christianity.

Well, we recognise that the battle for Christ is lost or won, so far as the working classes are concerned, *not* in the arena of Church life, or in the debating club, or in the public press, but on the working man's own battlefield—*the workshop*. Far too much importance is attached to the argument of the lip and the pen. A thousand

*Clarions* and a thousand Blatchfords are powerless before clean living and unselfish devotion to the service of others in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Hence we say to the man or woman who wants to be a Salvationist: "Don't expect an easy life here. Christ came to give a sword. You must come out from the world, and yet be in it. Your life must shine. The people won't read their Bibles, but they will read you. You must reveal Christ to them. Have nothing to do with the fashions and pleasures of the world. Neither taste, touch, nor handle intoxicating drink. Ever part with what may be perfectly legitimate if you find that by so doing you can better lead men to God. Bear all things. Do good to others, especially the neediest and the weakest. Love God with all your heart. Be kind and gentle in your manners, and strong and unchangeable in righteousness."

By instruction, by encouragement, by discipline, by direction, we work for the making of men and women of this type. Christ needs *followers*, not merely believers, and the secret of the Army's strength, and its growing hold on the imagination and confidence of the working

man, is just here. He *sees* in the average Salvationist a Christ man. When you have done all you can in the way of providing Christian clubs, attractive services, and cheap literature (apart from newspapers) for the working man as such, he will remain glued to his idols and indifferent to the vital claims of Christianity unless faced with God in the shape of godly Christians day after day. The prospect of converting the British working man may appear very dim to those who pin their faith to measures and messages that do not rely upon such a high standard of practical, living exposition as ours to secure the acceptance of Christ.

But in saying so we give the result of twenty-five years' labour among working men, and we do not despair. Nay, we never saw more occasion than the present for hope. Is not this, after all, the right, the reasonable, the Scriptural line on which to travel toward the realisation of our dreams? Men, whether millionaires or crossing-sweepers, are only truly convicted of unrighteousness, a personal need of God, and the power of Christ to help men to overcome sin, by those who have actually proved the reality of

these things. We have again and again sought for instances of working men who have been *changed* in their character and their attitude to God by mere academical discussion of, and argument upon, the evidences of Christianity, and we cannot recall one such instance. We have gathered abundant proof of bitterness caused thereby. On the other hand, we have seldom failed to discover that the connection between a working man's abandonment of infidelity and selfish extravagances and his enrolment as a Christian, has been through such simple and powerful testimonies as we have suggested.

The present head of our musical department, rapidly becoming the greatest of its kind in the Christian world, was an avowed atheist and a clever lecturer and debater. His philosophy was overthrown by the argument of the saintliness of a faithful maid. One of the Army's coming men was typical of the British drunken, gambling workman. He was compelled to throw his vices to the winds by the true and tender life of a workmate in a coal-pit. An old exciseman is at present an officer in South London. He was reproved of

his meanness, and moved to repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, by the truthfulness and Christlike spirit of a fellow-worker. We have known of offices, workshops, and warehouses virtually transformed from being a seed-ground of drunkards and gamblers, to the reverse, through the leaven of one man's whole-hearted Christianity; and it is part of our special work to examine reports that come to us week by week which record hundreds of conversions bearing out the power of this leaven. We need not multiply illustrations.

The practical question for the readers of this book is, How are these results attained? Certainly not by profound analyses of the arguments for and against the supernatural, and the doctrines of Inspiration, the Atonement, the Resurrection of the dead, and so forth. Neither are these results attained by appealing to the self-interest of the people—that they will have more to gain by serving Christ than by serving the Devil, true as that is; and certainly not by pandering to the vanity and vices of the working classes. No! whatever our faults and limitations are—and we are not by any means blind to them—that is not our weakness. If we have made

any inroads upon the godless, churchless masses of the land it has been on a straight line. Our standard of morality is, above all, our paraphernalia, and therefore the result is, we repeat, worthy of the most serious consideration of all who have the best interests of the people at heart.

And here we may be permitted to offer, with all deference, some counsel on the question. We do not think the Church has much to gain in lending its influence to party warfare. Nor do we consider it adds to its strength and usefulness among the working classes by identifying itself with movements in which, and by which, it cannot directly exercise its office of blessing the poor, relieving the distressed, and saving the bodies and souls of the people. Its supreme work is to save men, whether they be Socialists, Radicals, Liberals, or Conservatives, from their sins. The quality of goodness is the great determining factor in the moral advance of the people. Good lawmakers will make good laws. Good masters will make good workmen, and good workmen will make good masters. Apart from what we consider the intrinsic soundness of these propositions, we think that for the Church it is also

wise policy. The working man wants to think out his politics for himself, and as a rule—a rule to which, we admit, there are a few exceptions—he is capable of doing so without outside advice. The political parson stands in the way of the working man embracing the principles of Christianity. The working men of to-day need a Church which understands them, is in sympathy with them as a class, puts them in their proper place—neither unduly exalting them nor treating them as if they were inferiors—and makes them feel that the Church on Sundays as on week-days is their home and their place of meeting.

As to the sins of the working men, that, with us, is of comparatively secondary importance. They gamble, they drink, and are profligates with their leisure and strength. All very sad and very true. But the State as the guardian of the people's interests, and the Church as shepherd of the sheep and of the lambs, are not without spots on their garments. The working men are largely what they have been made, and they have no particular brand of sin, in our opinion, which does not mar other classes.

Now and again they are swayed by some question which appeals to their self-interests or

lower passions, and these ebullitions of temperament do not lose anything at the hands of the descriptive writer Far more to be deplored are the vast numbers who are indifferent to Christianity. The explanation, however, is simple. Christianity as represented by the average Christian is indifferent, and until Christianity is interpreted more liberally and more generally by the *spirit* of Christ, the present state will remain.

## VIII

## By GEORGE LANSBURY

For all practical purposes the people of England are outside the pale of *all* religious denominations. This is true not of towns only, but of villages. But though this is so, I do not think it would be true to say that the mass of English people are irreligious and cared nothing at all for each other.

In all the talks I have had with workmen and women on the subject, I have seldom met the man or woman who did not acknowledge that their own lives were to a large extent governed by principles and ideas gained from the teachings of Christ. In fact, some who are loudest in their condemnation of the Churches, have been amongst the foremost in doing work for others, and helping those up who are down. But when such people are asked why they don't accept the Christian teaching as preached in the

Churches, it is nearly always one answer which is given, and that is this: That in a church or chapel a man will hear lofty sentiments preached from the pulpit—sentiments which all the congregation believe in, and are supposed to believe in, and yet on Monday morning the sentiments are carefully forgotten, and Christians fight as hardly to make money as the non-professing Christian does. And again, that the preacher in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred takes the side of the rich against the poor.

As I write there comes to my mind the picture of a very wealthy man I know well. He gives most generously of his wealth to the chapels of the denomination of which he is a member. Away from business he is a generous, open-hearted man, full of good works, but in his business he is mean—mean in paying his men; mean in his dealings with others; always ready and on the alert to overreach his fellows. This man is typical of thousands of members of our churches and chapels. The workman is constantly asking of what use can be such people's faith, and gifts to the poor, if the only effect is to make a man the greater part of his life a mean, grasping sort of person, who salves his conscience and makes

his future safe in heaven by giving back a small portion of the proceeds of his meanness to the poor.

What workmen want to see is some attempt at putting Christianity into business. They don't understand a religion that permits one brother to have too much and another not enough. They don't understand the Christianity which proclaims it as God's will and ordering, that men and women, boys and girls, should be sweated to death making matchboxes at 2¼d. per gross, and stitching clothes at 8d. per day. Neither do they understand why it is that the Christian Church by its silence allows the problem of unemployment to be practically untouched. Where are the leading Christian ministers who demand from the nation the right to work for all men and women? Where is the Church in England that has entered, or is entering, a protest against the labour of women and children being used to cut down wages? And where is the Church that is demanding for the worn-out soldiers of industry adequate maintenance in old age?

We hear of the sins of the workmen, and of course they are many. What people want to

hear is the Churches preaching not only duties but rights. They don't understand the clergyman who talks of the blessings of wealth which God is supposed to bestow on some portion of the community and poverty on the other. The ordinary man sees quite clearly that wealth comes to those who exploit labour; comes to those who by using their brains are able to use the labour of their fellows; comes to those who shut their eyes to human suffering, and displace men and women, and let machines turn out wealth for their individual use, even though in so doing they cause hundreds to starve. The ordinary workman won't believe that this is God's will at all, and so he keeps outside the churches where the doctrine that wrong is right is taught. Let a man or woman arise who will teach Christ's gospel to the people in all its simplicity and truth, and show men and women that the good things of life are for the use of all, and that heaven is here or nowhere, and men and women will again hear such a teacher gladly.

Why is it that in Ireland the Roman Church keeps its hold over the people?—and despite all that is said against it, this faith has at any rate kept the Irish people in Ireland much more decent

than many other people who claim better forms of faith and morals. Why is it, I ask, that the Church in Ireland is comparatively so much stronger than in England? I believe it is because the Irish priesthood has been and is recruited from the people, and retains its sympathy with the aspirations and hopes of the people. The last twenty-five years has demonstrated that the Church in Ireland really voiced the people's cry for freedom. I may be told that the Roman Church simply accepted this position because otherwise it would have lost its hold over the people. It may be so—I am not able to judge; but I can judge from my own observation that religion in Ireland is a more real thing to the very poor than it is in England, and I think the reason for it is as stated.

How different it all is in England. All can see it quite clearly, for what happened when five hundred unemployed men, headed by their parish priest, marched from Leicester to London? They had tramped those hundred miles through rain and storm, cheered and encouraged by religious services and songs. On arriving here in London they asked to see His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, the lineal descendant

of the Apostles, and his answer was that he was full of sympathy, but it was no use seeing him, as he really had not the time to study the question, and so make up his mind what should be done. This is true of the head of the Anglican Church, and so far as public utterances go, it is true of the heads of the Roman and Free Churches. It should be known that the people who made themselves responsible for food and shelter for these Leicester men were not members of any religious body at all, but one or two men not connected with any religious denomination. In Yorkshire, at one of the collieries, scores of families as I write are being cast out on to the roadside, piteously evicted from their homes by the owners, so as to compel men to go to work under conditions they object to. So far as I have been able to discover, no leading minister of any denomination has uttered a word of protest.

A thing like this would not happen in Ireland on any countryside, without the parish priests being out side by side with the people against the oppressor. In England exactly the reverse happens, and it is this which causes so many people to declare that religion as understood

here is of no account except to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Another thing which helps to keep people away from the churches and the chapels is the fact that almost all clergymen in large towns take the side of the Charity Organisation Society in its dealings with the poor. I know that this Society is gradually reforming itself, and am hopeful that very soon it will be a really useful body, but up to now it has stood in every district in England for harsh and unbrotherly treatment of the poor, and consequently the bulk of people have not been able to understand how those who more than others stand, or should stand, for the Christ life amongst men have been found hand in hand with such a society of reactionaries. I am certain that it is this kind of thing which makes religion repugnant to many people.

The ordinary workman is also unable to understand why one rule of conduct is laid down by our religious teachers for the rich and another for the poor. We continually hear the drinking and gambling habits of the poor called in question, and rightly so; but how many religious leaders feel called upon to denounce the rottenness at the heart of Society? Here and there one is found who

stands out and asks for the same moral code all round, but for one who does, thousands keep quiet and hold their tongues, and allow wickedness to flourish in high places unrebuked. Moreover, they receive gifts from the evil-doers. When the workman does think, he is unable to square the denunciation of betting amongst the poor and the acceptance of gold-plate and ornaments for cathedrals from people who gamble on the stock exchanges of the world for millions. Neither do they understand how the man who owns and runs race-horses comes to be regarded as a good Christian, while the man who makes a bet is a sinner. Neither do they understand why swagger garden parties, and Sunday golf, and Bridge parties can be compatible with the Christian life, while workmen's excursions and demonstrations are written down as a desecration of the Sabbath. When our religious teachers discuss the religious observance of the Sabbath they must be prepared to call in question the travelling and amusements of all classes as well as those of the poor, or their preaching will be in vain. It will not do to have settled convictions where the poor are concerned, and unsettled convictions where Mr. Balfour's golf is called in question.

Then as to home life. How often have I heard working women make light of the inconsistency of the parson and his wife. When visiting, they have complained of the dirtiness of the home and the non-attendance at church or chapel. Those who complain seldom clean their own boots, and never, except in quite rare instances, scrub a floor. When poor women think at all, they do not understand why another should feel it quite right and proper to get all the nasty dirty work of life done for her, and yet expect her sister to do all these things for herself and still be cheerful and tidy, and take an interest in things around her. To me the most important question for the Christians of England to consider is this condition-of-women question. While writing, a woman typical of thousands in East London where I live has called to see me, her husband out of work four months; the brokers in; two little children starving at her side. The Guardians have helped all they can, but at last have ordered the House, and the poor woman, not more than thirty, is broken down body and soul at the thought of it. What does she care, what can she care, for church or chapel if life to her means, as it so often does, the workhouse before

middle age is passed? I can't find it in my heart to say to her she is my sister in the sight of God, neither do the other professing Christians of these parts. So she passes on, indifferent to our creed, which to her is meaningless.

Then think of the crowds of married women of whom this one is typical. Who in the churches preaches to her the religious duty of revolt against all those conditions? So far as I know not one. All the poor hear on every hand is the duty of the rich to help the poor. What they are waiting to hear is the gospel of duty preached to the rich: that the rich should work for their own living and cease exploiting and robbing the poor. They want this not only preached but lived. Our children learn more from their mothers than from any one else, and where poor women are thinking at all, it is not with feelings of reverence and awe of our religion, but with feelings akin to contempt for the hollow mockery and shame put before them as the teaching of Christ. Those women do not understand the one law for the rich and another for the poor; they don't understand the manner in which rich, well-to-do women whose lives are notoriously evil are accepted in Society,

and the frightful disgrace which is heaped upon a poor girl who happens to fall. They want a moral code which will fit all round, and which will take into consideration conditions and circumstances whenever a judgment is to be given.

I look on the Church in England as being legally and morally the birthright of the people: its money, its buildings, its services have all been left and devised for the people as a whole, not for any section. However much it may be wrapped up in formulas and ceremonies, its teaching, if it has any foundation at all, is to be found in the Gospels. These teach not that riches are the most important thing, but that the life spent in the service of our fellows is the thing we should all strive to attain to. What would England be like if each one of us was considering his neighbour? Where would our slums be if each regarded his fellow as his brother-man?

I often ask working men not to judge Christianity by its modern forms, but to judge it for what it really is. If it stands, as I hold it does, for the bettering of men and women, then those of us who think so must stand together, and in spite of all opposition

must make our Church once again the Church of the people, where we may once more meet together for common prayer and service. We need to get back to the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, as I understand it. Before his time men served God, or thought they did, by retiring from the world. St. Francis saw that that simply meant running away from responsibility, and so he came out from the midst of riches and lived his life amongst the poor and lowly. He built his Order up from amongst the poor, and drew rich and poor to himself not by what he preached but by his life.

Our country needs that sort of spirit to-day never more than now. On all sides there is a vague sort of craving for something we haven't got. On all sides there is an eager kind of desire to get rich without work, to enjoy luxury and ease at the expense of others. This is true of all classes. Therefore I think if this country of ours is to be lifted up, it must be by those amongst us who wish for better things remembering that it is by individual lives that the world is reformed, that character is as important to-day as ever it has been, and that if our quarrel with the rich and the exploiting

classes is only because we wish to change places, then we are simply as bad as they, and the world would be no better, but perhaps worse.

Those of us who wish for reforms must be full of the spirit which sent Francis out into the world a beggar to help raise his fellow-men and women. Selfishness is not the prerogative of any one class: it is to be found amongst us all, in all our homes, and therefore both rich and poor have to get into their own lives more unselfishness than there is just now; and while I for one will never hold my tongue nor shut my eyes to the selfishness of the rich, I want to say to my fellows amongst the workmen, that in their treatment of home there is still much to be desired. Many a home in England is ruined by drink; many another by gambling; many another by laziness.

Merely calling the rich names for their sins won't help us to overcome our own. Calling the parson names won't help reform and make true our own lives. Very often abuse of the parson and Christianity is only a cloak to cover up our own sins; it is rather nice to excuse one's self from self-denial by declaring all Christians are humbugs. I have known men give all kinds

of reasons why they are not followers of Christ, but in many cases the reason not given is the true one, namely, because they are too selfish.

That is why I want those of us who agree that we are all brothers and sisters in the sight of God to be prepared to act as such; to be prepared to give up time and energy, not for our own sake but for the sake of our fellows; to be prepared to remain simply in the ranks if by that means we can best serve humanity. I want, as Mr. Charles Booth said in one of his books, that some one among us shall arise and say to the dead bones of theology with which England is cursed: Arise, and give place to a real faith—a faith which will teach men to live their creed here and now, and bring God's kingdom on earth.

The greatest curse to us all, whatever we call ourselves, is apathy and indifference; whatever our ism may be—whether Socialism, Liberalism, Toryism, Churchism, whatever it is—we all complain that people are indifferent and won't be roused.

I, at any rate, think this will continue till men and women are moulded and inspired by a grand ideal. I am conservative enough to believe that the grandest ideal ever put before men

and women was that which our Saviour taught two thousand years ago. To me it is a matter of indifference whether some one else said it before Him. It was taught to me by Him. Amid all the doubts and perplexities of life it stands out clear as a beacon light, and it is this :—

> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
> With all thy heart, and with all thy strength ;
> And thy neighbour as thyself.
> This do and thou shalt live.

Few amongst us, either rich or poor, church or chapel people, strive to do this, and the consequence is misery and wretchedness all round. We have robbed the words of all meaning, and until we get back again to a pure faith, which will result in works, there is not much hope.

It is no use telling me, as I am often told, that this is impossible under present conditions ; that the man who considers his neighbour goes to the wall, etc. etc. If workmen only (leaving out all other classes) would for one single year devote their spare time to thinking out how they, as individual men, could improve society, they would really work marvels, and while blessing their fellows, would wondrously bless their own

lives. What happens nowadays? One seldom hears an employed workman speak of the unemployed unless there has been a great agitation on the whole subject. The unemployed man forgets the unemployed question as soon as he is in work again.

It seems to me, therefore, that the Labour movement needs the spirit of Christianity to give it increased life and strength. The ideals of Brotherhood and Fraternity of which we preach will be all the nearer when we each think of our duties as well as of our rights. It is just here that the Christian faith comes in. Let the men and women who wish to lead England show the same spirit in their work as did the saints and martyrs of old, and let the religious teachers, the archbishops, the bishops, the clergymen, the leaders of Nonconformity, come down off their lofty pedestal and take the lead in bringing social salvation to the people here and now. Let them not only voice the wrongs of the people, but let them denounce the commercial life which pays people to tell lies, which adulterates and cheats, which sweats the poor and exploits the workers,—let this be done not merely in the way of pious opinion, but of

set purpose, in season and out of season, as did Christ of old. Let our religious teachers claim for us all the right to live aright, to enjoy life not as the gift or by the charity of the rich, but by our own labour and our own worth. Let them preach the equal value not only of our souls but of our bodies also. Let them teach that the rich are rich because the poor are poor. Then, I am sure, even the common people would gladly throng our churches.

The mass of people are not opposed to Christianity. It has been said over and over again—I have heard workmen say it more than once—that if Christ were to come again He would be found living not in Park Lane but in West Ham, not living with the rich and wealthy but amongst the sweated. He would preach His gospel not to the contented, well-fed, prosperous merchant but to those who labour and are heavy laden. He would still be the Friend of sinners, and His message would be as of old: He who would gain his life must lose it. Is there no one amongst all our leading preachers who will come out and let our toiling men and women hear the true old Gospel ring out once again? The common people need it. They are as eager for it as ever they

were in years long ago. If any doubt my word, let them go amongst the poor and try to live as Christ lived, as the friend of those in trouble and difficulty, and they will rally to their side all that is best of any neighbourhood.

To me it is not Christianity opposed to Labour, or Labour opposed to Christianity, that is wrong. It is the wretched abortion passed off as Christianity which Labour opposes. If we are ever to make Christianity a real live force, this abortion must be got rid of, and in its place we must once more set up the doctrine, and carry it into actual life, that faith without works is dead; and that though I give my body to be burned, and have not love for my fellows, it availeth nothing.

## IX

### By the Rev. ENSOR WALTERS

If any class in society ought to be attracted to Christianity it is the working class. Christianity was born amongst the toilers, it made its earliest appeal to the "common people," and it won its first disciples from the ranks of working men and women. Jesus Himself stands before the world as the Carpenter of Nazareth—one born of a lowly virgin, who lived a simple and unostentatious life—the Comrade and Friend of the weary and heavy laden. His gospel throbs with hope for the toiler and for the victims of greed and oppression. At Nazareth He boldly adopted as His own the programme concerning Messiah found in Isaiah's prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering

of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (St. Luke iv. 18, 19). Little wonder that the common people heard Him gladly; that they compassed Him with love and admiration; that they brought to Him their sick that He might heal them, and their children that He might bless them. No teacher before or since has so appealed to struggling and hard-pressed humanity. And to-day the working man may look upon Jesus and say, "He was one of us."

Remembering this, it is a heart-rending fact that to-day in this country there is a great gulf between the Churches and the working classes. Of course the term "working class" is used here and throughout the article in its generally accepted sense. It is true that certain churches attract the workers. These are the exception. In his very striking book, a book which has not received the attention it deserves, *The Captive City of God*, Mr. Richard Heath says: "Dr. Clifford not long ago pointed out that 83 per cent of our countrymen are working men, and that only 3 per cent of these were being influenced by religious teaching. He referred to factories where out of hundreds of men only two

or three are connected with any church. He mentioned one factory where there were over a thousand men and only one Dissenter. I have myself," adds Mr. Richard Heath, "heard of another where there were just four who went to church or chapel, and who were in consequence called 'the angelic quartette.'"

It is time that professing Christians faced facts, and the fact is, that the working class, as a class, is outside the Churches. The working man leaves the Churches to middle and upper class people, who are more influenced by conventional usage, and is content to remain outside the buildings consecrated to the worship of the "Carpenter of Nazareth."

As one intimately acquainted with working-class life, I deny that this alienation arises from opposition on the part of the workers to Jesus or to His teaching. Let any who hold such a view enter into friendship with working men, visit their homes, study their politics and their amusements. Let them notice their treatment of their children, their attitude towards the sick and dying. They may find in such a study much to criticise, but my experience is exceptional if they hear harsh words concerning Jesus,

or the vapourings of blasphemous atheism. Open-air preachers who face the man in the street, and who declare the truth without the support of the pulpit of a church, know that the message they deliver is listened to with respect, and often indeed meets with audible expressions of approval. I do not say that there is no antagonism on the part of the workers to organised religion—the religion of the Churches, and later I will give my reasons for such antagonism; but I do say that there is no general antagonism to Jesus. Generally speaking the working man believes in God: the "Almighty" One who is on the side of right-doing; in Jesus, the human expression of God—he would not express himself concerning Jesus quite in this language; he is not a theologian. He believes in a hereafter, and hopes that finally all will be well. The Church, however, he cannot quite understand; it is not his concern. "P.S.A.'s" may be organised on his behalf; they are not THE Church, but gatherings to interest him—from which the middle and upper class man stays away. The Church as the Body of Christ, the communion of saints, and the house of God,—

these sacred truths the working man has not grasped.

Many are the reasons which may be assigned for this condition of affairs. In the forefront should be placed the social condition of the worker. And when will professing Christians grasp the tragic social conditions of the hard-pressed poor? When will they cease the perpetual charges of thriftlessness, drunkenness, idleness? It is significant that such charges usually come from those who know nothing of the sad lot of multitudes, and who level them from suburban dwelling-places and amidst comfortable surroundings. How can a half-starved man be a model of thrift and sobriety? And there are in our midst thousands of half-starved men, women, and even children.

Think of London, the wealthiest city in the world; politically, religiously, socially the capital of the world; yet possessing poverty more bewildering, more depressing, than is to be found anywhere else. One-third of the population is below the line of very poor. Week by week there are deaths from starvation; but as these occur beneath the shadow of our own homes and not thousands of miles away, we

are not unnecessarily alarmed. We sob over the lot of the poor Russian peasant and the persecuted Armenian, but "our poor, you know, are so idle, so thoughtless, and the amount they spend in drink is perfectly shocking!" Granted there be any truth in this—and I am not going to argue that it is absolutely baseless, although it is unjust—what of the children? —the children

> Weeping in the playtime of the others,
> In the country of the free—

the children of the city, some of whom go to the Elementary School, and then fall fainting from the forms for lack of food? Is it the duty of the State to feed them? Who answers No? Atheists, or Secularists, or Socialists, I think not; but rather the "No" comes from charitably disposed Christians, who are in the grip of the dogmas of an effete political economy, and who to teach parental responsibility are willing that little children should be half-starved.

Nor is this social misery confined to London; it is found more or less all over the country. Increasingly is heard, and will be heard, the tramp of a vast army of unemployed. Will

the members of the Churches listen? It is their duty to declare good tidings to the poor, and to stem this torrent of misery. Until it is stemmed the half-starving cannot cultivate the higher human instincts, nurture the soul, and seek the highest. Unemployment is a foe to high living and noble thinking.

But the poverty of the workers is not their only ill. We live in times of much boasted progress. Modern progress is not altogether a blessing. This land, once a country of villages and small towns, has become a country of large towns and mighty cities. The continual immigration to the towns of the worker has led to a famine in houses of a suitable character and rent. It is not necessary to dwell at length on the housing question. Mr. George Haw in his *No Room to Live*, and other works, has rendered conspicuous service in calling attention to this crying evil. Much is being done to remedy it, but the words of D. L. Moody, the great evangelist, are full of force still: "The Home was founded before the Church, and you in Britain stand more in need of homes than you do of churches." How often the stately church seems to mock the squalid slum-

dwelling near at hand, and the squalid slum-dwelling to rebuke the stately church. And by the side of this vast army of the ill-fed, underpaid, and ill-housed are the prosperous church-going throng. Between the two a great gulf is fixed. Let an ill-clad worker enter a fashionable suburban church, accompanied, say, by his wife and children, and let him enter a pew in the chief places—is he welcomed as a brother in the Father's House? Is it not true that after two thousand years of Christianity many Churches are still deaf to much of the teaching of their faith? How strangely applicable to modern times is the teaching of St. James: "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts?" (St. James ii. 1-4.)

Let not the truth be disguised that it will be no easy matter to attract the working classes to the Churches. Those who bear the name of Christ stand condemned in the face of a cruel social system. They have not been wilfully neglectful of the cry of the people, but rather thoughtless, preoccupied by other things. And as a result many of the leaders of the working classes, wounded by the indifference of the Churches, have turned, and are turning, from Jesus to a socialism which, whilst teaching many of the truths He came to declare, denies His Divinity, and regards His disciples as its foes. Outside our country this alienation from organised Christianity has gone alarming lengths. Continental Socialism now stands as a deadly enemy to Christianity and the Churches. It confuses ecclesiasticism with the doctrines of Jesus, and the denial of Labour's legitimate aspirations with the creed of Christianity. In this country we are at the parting of the ways. Fortunately for the Churches there have been men of lofty mind and noble life who have not hesitated to claim for the teaching of Jesus the ultimate authority to rule social life, laws, and practice, —men who have presented Christ as the champion

of the hard-pressed poor, the enemy of tyranny, oppression, and greed. The names of such pioneers as Maurice and Kingsley stand out; they have been followed by others, and to-day there are multitudes in all the Churches who are determined to save the Churches from the grip of outworn formulas and a lifeless respectability.

Another significant sign is that many of the most trusted present-day Labour leaders are firm in their allegiance to Jesus. They base even their political propaganda upon Him, and look to Him for the coming victory. Whilst amongst others, less emphatic in their religious beliefs, there is wonderful reverence for the Man of Nazareth.

A few months ago I was privileged to preside at a Conference in South London to consider the attitude of the Free Churches to the Labour movement. Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., who pleaded the cause of Labour, argued entirely from the Christian standpoint. Some speakers who represented the Labour movement attacked organised Christianity, but not one said a disrespectful word concerning Jesus. To me it seemed that His sacred name was the dominating

fact in the mind of every speaker. And there is abundant proof everywhere that if the Churches will arise to their great opportunity they may capture the Labour movement for Christ, and lead the way for His complete victory.

Let it clearly be understood that the way of reconciliation is not the way of "Charity." It is a fatal mistake to assume that the working classes may be won for Christianity by soup kitchens, night shelters, "doss" houses, and blankets. Philanthropy often curses where it intends to bless. One may ask whether much of the boasted philanthropy of to-day is a true expression of Christianity. For instance, the multiplication of night shelters and Labour homes tends to attract the lazy from the country to the town, and makes it possible for men to live an entirely unsatisfactory life on a few coppers a day. Again, the Church sees a slum, and erects therein a soup kitchen and mission hall, instead of saying, "In the name of God this slum must be swept off the face of the earth." One cannot too strongly emphasise that when the motto of the Church of Jesus is *Justice* not Charity, the dawn of a new day will have come. And to my

mind justice means employment for every man, and if a man refuses employment, then punishment; it further means a more equitable distribution of property; less luxury and more general comfort. It means an old age free from the taint of pauperism. In short, justice calls for a Christian Revolution.

This Christian revolution will be attained when the Churches are faithful to the mighty truths enshrined in the Incarnation of Jesus. Theologians have dwelt much upon original sin and human depravity; and acquaintance with life partly explains the reasons for this. But Revelation not alone reveals human sinfulness, it also sets forth the glory of man. Man created in the image of God is linked on to Deity by the coming of Jesus. He was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren. This being so, how foolish to sing

If so poor a worm as I.

A worm! One who claims relationship with Deity, one who is a brother of Jesus. If the Church declares the truth of the Incarnation, class distinctions fade away, aristocrats and working men are one in Him. Sweating, greed, and

tyranny are an insult to Deity. Starvation, misery, and want an insult to the Most High. Would that the Churches had responded to the appeal of Mazzini; Europe would have presented a vastly different spectacle than she presents to-day! "Make yourselves," said Mazzini,[1] "equal as far as it can be done. And that not only because human nature has everywhere the same right, but because you can elevate men only by elevating MAN, by raising their idea of life which the spectacle of inequality tends to lower. When the arms of Christ, even yet stretched out upon the Cross, shall be loosened to press the whole human race in one embrace—when there shall be no more pariahs nor Brahmins, nor servants, nor masters, but only *men*—we shall adore the great name of God with much more love and faith than we do now."

As there is need for insistence upon the doctrine of the Incarnation, there is also need for a declaration of the truths of Christianity concerning the proper use of wealth. It is sad that this aspect of Christianity has been so

[1] "Democracy in Europe," by Joseph Mazzini. *The People's Journal*, vol. ii. pp. 115-118 (184).

neglected. How clear is the teaching of Jesus and that of His disciples! And yet, in a Christian country, vulgar wealth, magnificence, and luxury are allowed without definite protest to flaunt themselves within stone's-throw of starvation and want. How surprised and shocked the modern world would be if modern preachers caught the spirit say of St. James, and uttered words like his: "Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. . . . Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter" (St. James v. 1-6). It is a significant fact that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost influenced the early Christian view of wealth. Indeed, Christian Socialism first found expression after the day of Pentecost, for "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was

his own; but they had all things common" (Acts iv. 32).[1]

Of late we have experienced religious revival in this country; undoubtedly the Spirit of God has been working. There is to be another Revival, another Divine outpouring; this will have an effect not only upon heart but also upon pocket. Then the poor will bless the rich, and the rich find comradeship with the poor.

Further, if all classes are to be won by the Churches, the Churches must broaden their basis. The most significant event at the last Assembly of the National Evangelical Free Church Council was the extraordinary enthusiasm with which the Rev. J. Ernest Rattenbury's plea that the Church should be the Home of the people was received. Of course the statement that the Church should be the Home of the people needs qualifying. The ideal is every home a church; but whilst society exists in the present form, and there goes up the cry of the ill-housed, it is the imperative duty of the Church to provide for the social well-being of the poorest; to care less for Trust property and more for God's property, and to fling open her doors day by

[1] See also Acts ii. 44, 45.

day, and night by night. It is a striking exhibition of selfish folly to build stately churches at great cost and to open them only twice a week—for brief Sunday services. The High Anglican and Roman Catholic use of their churches is surely saner than the policy of the closed door which obtains so largely in the Free Churches. One may be grateful for the signs of a change—a change which is seen in the Institutional Churches and Central Missions of present day Nonconformity.

Further, if the Churches are to touch hard-pressed men and women, ministers and preachers must be willing to preach the Gospel in park, open air, and street. Let preaching be emphasised. Too long Churches have permitted open-air preaching to be held in disrepute. Enthusiastic young men who would not be tolerated in any pulpit have been allowed to inflict themselves on long-suffering congregations in the open air. Let the minister himself, who has been trained to think and to speak, and who ought to be able to present the truths of Christianity, face the man in the street. He will learn lessons that may help him. If his sermon does not "go" his audience will. He will not

be able to read his sermon, or recite tawdry rhetoric or conventional platitudes. He must speak in plain English the truths upon which all hopes of redemption rest.

Finally, there is the vital question of Church government. The Free Churches generally accept more or less the principle of democratic government. Let them make that principle a reality. How many genuine representatives of the working classes are to be found in the Wesleyan Conference, the Baptist Union, and the Congregational Union Assemblies, and in the other great Church Assemblies? Are not the overwhelming majority representative of the middle class? Are not these assemblies dominated by middle-class ideas? I believe that the voices of the representatives of Labour would be welcomed in these Conferences. But this can only be accomplished by the simple rule which generally applies to ministerial representatives, that the expenses of *all* delegates—lay and clerical—to Church Conferences should be borne by the Churches to which they belong. Nothing has brought the present House of Commons nearer to things as they are than the voice of Labour, and nothing will more

help the Churches than to hear the same voice in their National Assemblies.

In closing I would strike a hopeful note. The days of this country are not numbered. In the political world a new spirit is abroad. From the impending wreck of parties one can prophesy that there will emerge a new party—a party claiming social justice, a party Christian in spirit and in purpose. The inspirer of that party will be Jesus of Nazareth. And with His coming as Master of our national life, the Church will find her Lord. She will put on her beautiful garments, and will be the handmaid of the State in effecting a Revolution, not marred by bloodshed or spoilt by cruelty. Then a new Pentecost shall dawn. Poverty and starvation shall be unknown, for the property of each will be the property of all. Then the Church shall be the Father's House, and in that house men shall rejoice that class distinctions have ceased, and that all are "one in Christ Jesus."

## X

### By T. EDMUND HARVEY, L.C.C.

The stranger who visits for the first time one or two of the principal streets of East London must sometimes be struck with surprise at the signs of religious and philanthropic activity which the buildings about him appear to show. The eye falls from time to time on hospitals and almshouses, maternity homes and shelters, and here and there upon some imposing institute or coffee-tavern, on mission halls and institutions built for other beneficent ends, besides numerous churches and chapels, occasional offices of philanthropic societies, and a number of buildings devoted to the propagation of Christianity among the Jews. Some, as their foundation stones tell him, have been opened by peers of the realm, or built by merchant princes; and if he care to look at balance-sheet and annual report, he will see long lists

of generous subscribers, and evidence of a vast amount of earnest and zealous activity

Here surely, he may say, is proof enough that religion is a real thing—that the Church is at work with effect amongst the masses of the people. Can all these agencies for good fail to bring inspiration and encouragement to those about them; are they not sufficient indication that England is indeed a Christian country? He would scarcely believe it were he told that there are men living almost under the shadow of these very institutions who would willingly see most of them swept away, who regard the system from which they spring as an injustice, and the religion which they represent as a mockery and a sham. Yet if he is willing to look more closely at what he has observed, and to try and realise the point of view which these men represent, he might perhaps see that there was deeper truth than he had imagined in what they urge.

How little all these activities which he noted with such interest have affected the daily lives of the majority of the inhabitants he will hardly be able to tell, even when he comes to know better the squalid back-courts, the great block

dwellings, and the weary network of little dull streets in which they live; but if he will go into one or two of the churches and chapels he will perhaps see how far they are from filling the place he had imagined them to hold. One church, in spite of its diligent clergy, is more than half-empty; most of the worshippers belong obviously to the more comfortable section of the community, or are connected with some neighbouring institution; of the remainder, a number seem to represent the pensioned poor of the parish, and the scanty gleanings for which trained nurse and district visitor have toiled. Not far away he may perhaps enter a chapel of imposing size, and mark again a small and respectable congregation gathered, listening to a sermon in which the preacher contrasts the flock of true believers with the great world, the publican and the sinner. The congregation is very different from that which gathers at another hour in an adjoining mission room to receive a dole of food and a dose of gospel; but neither group will seem to him representative of the mass of workers who live not far away. If he continue his search he may perhaps be cheered by finding a large

company at some more progressive chapel, listening to an earnest preacher in some great mission hall, or bowed in reverent worship at one of the more advanced High churches, whose clergy are pouring out their lives unselfishly for the good of those around them, and for the sake of the cause which that worship symbolises.

Yet, making all allowance for such success as this, it still remains true that, apart from a few occasions in their lives, the great bulk of the workers remain unaffected directly by church, chapel, or mission, if they are not even repelled by them; the church-goer has often to run a gauntlet of chaff and not always friendly criticism from his mates. What is the meaning of it all?

Is it not that the Christianity of the Churches has become a respectable middle-class institution, part of a condition of society which many of the more thoughtful workers feel to be out of harmony with their ideals of justice and of progress? They are aware of the great revolution of scientific thought that has been accomplishing itself in the last two generations, and in exaggerated form, perhaps. they have learnt

of the changed views that historical criticism has brought to students of ecclesiastical and biblical history; they do not feel that the Churches have accepted these changes in frank sincerity. But deeper even than this intellectual insincerity of organised Christianity is felt the moral insincerity of a system which fails so completely to apply in everyday life the standard of ethics which it professes to reverence. The hostility which one not infrequently may hear expressed in debate and otherwise against some of the most beautiful of the sayings of Christ springs in reality, in many cases at least, from disgust at the insincerity of those who profess to be guided by them, and live in such complete indifference to their spirit.

In one case, a man who suffers his goods to be distrained upon rather than offend his conscience on the question of the Education rate is in his own business a stern master, stinting his employees' wages, selling cheaply-made goods on the keenest business principles. In another, a factory owner who is regular in attendance at church and subscribes handsomely to many a charity allows his old hands to be dismissed whenever there is a slackening of trade, pre-

ferring to keep the young and vigorous, regardless of the difficulty a man who has grown grey in his service may have in earning even a pittance elsewhere. He lives in comfort in his country house, where he is a model landlord, taking personal interest in the men on his estate, and spending money freely on cottage and farm. The men who work to make his money in the town are too numerous to be more than figures in the firm's account-books, and he is ignorant of the crowded streets in which they live, of the problems and hardships of their home lives.

Is it then so wonderful that amongst these workers Christianity is judged by the jerry-built tenement and the relentless crush of modern business methods? If these be the result of the teachings of Christ and the outcome of a Christian civilisation, they turn elsewhere for inspiration.

But how is it that a truer impression has not been given by the daily lives of all the ministers and missionaries who, dwelling in the midst of their people, are seeking to make Christianity a reality? Of course their work is not without effect, but as a whole the result is not what one might expect. Although

individual unselfishness and sacrifice may be recognised, they do not prevent a widespread feeling that the clergy are there because it is their business. Even their orthodoxy is discounted by a like suspicion. No doubt one reason for this may be that often enough the parson has in practice shown himself as the representative of a superior class, guarding his dignity even when giving ungrudgingly of his time and thought. But quite apart from this, it is only too true of many working-class districts that almost the only representatives of the cultured classes are the parson and the doctor, both of whom are there in a sense as professional men: shopkeepers and small employers prefer to live in pleasanter streets, or where they can have a small garden. A certain number of benevolent ladies come from their comfortable homes in the north and west to help in the local charities or in connection with church or mission, but they are too often patrons from another world, not neighbours fulfilling the simple duties of fellow-citizens.

This separation of the classes is perhaps most marked in London, where East and West are two worlds so ignorant of each other and so

far from daily contact, but it extends throughout the whole country, and will surely remain a permanent obstacle to the realisation of the ideals of Christianity and to the Christianising of the nation, as long as Christians are content to allow it to exist, and to mould their lives as though it were part of the natural order of things. Our social life, and with it our political life too, runs along narrow channels, controlled by selfish customs and false conventions. The free spirit of Christ, if we are willing to follow that rather than look merely at the institutions called after His name, would surely sweep away these pagan barriers from our midst; or rather, perhaps, in that new life such barriers would simply disappear. They could not exist in a community governed by the ideal of fraternal service which Christ taught His disciples.

If the Churches can make real to us this ideal, will it be possible for the separation of the lives of rich and poor to continue? It is this separation, surely, which above all else keeps the religion which is so real a thing in the individual lives of many of the comfortable classes from being a like help to a far greater

number amongst those less rich than they. We have plenty of earnest teachers to denounce the open sins which scourge us—drunkenness, gambling, impurity, and the rest. We need a prophet to stand up and denounce the supreme sin of respectable Christianity,—Suburbanism. The segregation of the well-to-do in the healthy and beautiful places of the land, jealously avoiding the intrusion of the ugly cottage and the unsightly flat, is a thing altogether incompatible with the spirit of Christ's teaching. The beautiful Surrey hillsides, dotted with rich men's houses, the costly monotony of West End streets and squares, and the acres of villa residences built side by side in many a suburb are a sadder sight than the slum. They stand for potential civic virtues half-wasted or misdirected, buried possibilities of usefulness, and often enough for lives whose best energies lie dormant, paralysed by comfortable selfishness that has become a second nature. If all the inhabitants of London were shuffled by some kindly Genius well together, rich and poor and middle classes made to share for a short time each other's lives, and to learn to know each other, can

any doubt that another London would result, which would be a wholly new city in something more than outward form?

There are strength and life enough in the Christian Churches to-day to do this work if only their congregations could be broken up and scattered broadcast amongst their fellows with the determination to share their lives as friends and neighbours. If those who were really in earnest to prove themselves Christians were willing to do this, would not they draw to the Church not only the estranged workers, but many among the cultured men of leisure in whose hearts is unrest, and who feel no attraction to the Churches as they see them to-day—the successors in so many ways of the Scribes and Pharisees rather than of Christ?

Possibly it may be objected that the separation of rich and poor as we see it in our large towns to-day is due to economic causes, and cannot be prevented thus. The same argument could be used in support of almost every wrong in social life, from slavery to the tied public-house. Others may feel that though they might do it themselves they could not risk the health of their children by giving up the suburb to live

in the crowded streets of an artisan district. Many who make such an excuse in all sincerity would have no difficulty in finding homes for themselves with far greater possibilities of physical well-being than they imagined could be the case in an East End district, where health is never out of reach of the well-to-do. But even if the sacrifice be what we imagine, and it must involve disadvantages of a material kind, while it is one which we are content to let our fellows bear, we ought to be willing to bear it ourselves. Thousands of workers have no choice but to live in these crowded districts, and we cannot free ourselves from responsibility for it all by a pious opinion that the system is wrong, or even by the desire to change it for a better. If we are to make Christ's teaching of human brotherhood a reality we must share our neighbour's burden, and not be content with protesting against its weight.

The experience we already have is enough to tell us how wide the response would be to such a movement. Amongst men who laugh at religion, the names of a Father Dolling or a Father Damien are greeted with respect: no difference as to dogma or ritual of worship can

hide the attractive power in such lives, the force of a social Christianity working out its ideal of unselfish service. What the Churches have so largely failed to do is being done up and down the country, and even to some extent in London, by the Adult Schools, which meet in the early hours of Sunday mornings, gathered around the teaching of Christ in the endeavour to follow His spirit more closely. Here you may find men talking together over passages in the Bible, discussing their difficulties and the practical problems of everyday life, with the desire to help each other and to learn more themselves, joining in this and in a simple act of common worship, without fixed creed or ritual, or any other fetter to bind them than the spirit of friendship and goodwill, which is the mark everywhere of a true Adult School. The study of some portion of the Bible, or of some deep problem of life and morals, forms each time the centre of the school lesson, whatever else may be taught or studied, and any one who has had much experience of Adult School work will testify to the wonderful way in which men of all classes, from unskilled labourers to artisans, shopkeepers and professional men, are brought together in

truly friendly relationships, without sense of patronage. Most of these schools are democratic bodies, electing their own officers and teachers; in the study of the lesson every one can take his share, and the more points of view are represented the better,—the introductory papers or opening remarks being often made not by the teacher or class president, but by the members in turn. There is no other test of membership than regular attendance, and in most schools a man or woman who has attended for four times becomes *ipso facto* a member.

Such schools provide common meeting-ground for men of all denominations and of none, where the highest and deepest things of life can be frankly discussed; they make it possible for men to know each other in a way that would be impossible in an ordinary social club, coming as they do with the desire to share with one another what is best and most real in their lives. On the other hand, some sort of social club in which the members may meet during the week is a natural and almost a necessary outcome of the Adult School on Sundays. In Birmingham and in some other places a number of public-houses whose licenses have been lost or abandoned have

formed just the home that was wanted for both school and club, and drunken frequenters of taverns have been turned into new men, eager to pass on to others the help that has come to them through the School. And thus the essentially democratic and voluntary character of the Adult School and its auxiliary clubs and societies, free from all professional leadership, and wholly dependent for existence upon the self-sacrifice of their members, ensures a field for the energies and interests of all who are induced to join. The besetting danger of every school is the increase of respectability that results from the changing lives of its members, but this may be met to some extent by the parent body sending out from time to time colonies of members to start new schools or branches.

The experience of the Midlands shows how wonderfully the Adult School is doing the work which should have been that of the Churches, but one would not ignore the fact that it does not always succeed in meeting the needs of every honest seeker after truth. Sometimes it may fall into mechanical respectability, or if the prevailing point of view of the older members be too lacking in catholic willingness to admit of

other lines of thought, the School may be crippled by intellectual and other narrowness. Certainly the movement still suffers from the lack of a fitting hymn-book. But, after all, it is not so much the Adult School itself which one wishes to advocate as the spirit which it represents and which has given it success. People have been banded together by it simply as desiring to be disciples of Christ in everyday life and all its relations; under this influence distinctions of wealth and class have sunk out of sight, and men have been knit together in the desire to be of service to each other and to those about them. It has been a practical demonstration of the living power of the Christian spirit unfettered by the traditions of institutions imperfectly adapted to the needs of to-day.

If the Christians of the Churches set about their work in this spirit will other changes too be needful?

Certainly there must be frank and honest endeavour to restate in the light of modern knowledge and modern needs the enduring truths which the husks of ancient dogma hide; willingness to recognise the human and the erroneous in former statements of truth, which,

just because it is living and enduring, needs to be re-formed anew with each succeeding age. We must leave behind that extraordinary lack of perspective which permits people to quarrel over suggested alterations in the introductory clause of the Athanasian Creed and fails to see how far the real problems of the age, the questions that trouble the thinkers of to-day, are removed from the intellectual difficulties of the Middle Ages. The old creeds can never be living to us as they were when they were made, because the whole atmosphere in which they grew up and the problems they were framed to solve no longer exist for us. We have to recognise that they had their place in their day as expressions of truth, glimpses from the human standpoint of the Divine and Eternal, of which we may have a further vision to-day. To aid us to this vision, men of science, critics and philosophers, psychologists, mystics and reformers, all bring their contribution, and if the Churches are to make their faith a reality to the people, they must be willing to welcome the new truth and honestly discard the outworn forms of word and phrase that only disfigure now the old truths which once they clothed.

In politics and in theology alike we have need to have the message of Christianity restated; but for disciples to whom the teaching and the personality of their Master is a living inspiration, this should be no painful process of disintegration. It is rather a task in which each one is called to play his part, knowing that the answer to the problems of the age must be worked out in the lives of men.

Even under existing conditions much may be done to remove prejudice and misunderstanding as to the meaning of Christianity by a frank endeavour to meet opponents, and to give them the opportunity of stating their case. People who will not come to hear a sermon or address, where they have no opportunity to hear other points of view stated or to reply themselves, have shown themselves willing and even eager to come to addresses followed by a time of perfectly free discussion. In one such case it has been very noteworthy how an atmosphere of hostility and of distrust was replaced in a few months' time by something of a kindlier spirit, and a willingness to recognise that there was honesty and earnestness to be found amongst opponents who seemed at first to be treated only

as conventional champions of an outworn faith. Possibly even there may have come, too, to some the conviction that, after all, Marx and Haeckel had not said the last word on human life, or seen most deeply into the riddle of the world. But at least the growth in charity and of mutual understanding amongst audience and speakers was fruit enough to justify the endeavour from which the discussions sprang.

This, after all, is but one instance out of many to show how wide and real is the response which the appeal of idealism constantly finds amongst men whose own lives are often sordid enough, and passed amidst cramping and narrowing conditions. The hidden impulses for good lie buried within them, and will flame forth in answer to the Divine appeal of spirit to spirit. If our Christian faith has brought us into constant touch with the unseen realities, and the Source of all power, will not the highest and best within us awaken a response in those with whom we come into contact, like answering to like? And as our own lives come to be governed and controlled by the indwelling of the Divine, will not the same Divine witness, present in the hearts of all men, make answer to the appeal of life to life?

One thing at least is certain. If Christians of all denominations are to make their name a reality in the world, they must make war upon the misunderstandings and the bitterness which separate them from each other. The disciple who wrote the Fourth Gospel records for us the picture of the Master by whose name we are called, praying that through the unity which should unite His followers the world might believe in His mission. It was to be a unity like that uniting inwardly the unique Son to the Divine Father. And how have we failed! It is not for external union that one would plead, nor for the sacrifice of the convictions either of individuals or communities. Even within the bounds of a church outwardly one and indivisible the schism of spirit from spirit may be deep. But there is no gulf that love cannot cross, and it is this spirit of love, which one naturally thinks of as supremely characteristic of the Master, which must fill our different communions, and remove all bitterness from the struggle each makes to arrive at truth and to interpret it most helpfully to others. It must be made possible for the pagan observer to say once more of us to-day: "See how these

Christians love one another." And until we make it possible in our own lives, at least, we have failed to be disciples of Christ.

As we live more in this spirit the sense of the underlying verities which unite us will deepen, and we shall feel, too, how much more in common we have than we had supposed with those who cannot call themselves by Christ's name. We shall realise how much we share with the devout Agnostic, and with every honest fighter for truth and right—every man who realises in his life the claims of others, the value of unselfishness, the supreme authority of ethical and spiritual ideals. The great battle the Christian has to fight is not with intellectual heresies, but with greed and selfishness, and all the armies of materialism; and in this struggle he has noble fellow-soldiers who are giving up their lives, without the strength of the supporting conviction that he enjoys, in the cause, though not in the name, of the same Leader.

Sometimes for a moment the veil that separates us is drawn asunder, and we realise how near we are to each other. I cannot forget how, in that fortress of progress which the socialist workmen of Belgium have built in

Brussels, the Maison du Peuple, as you pass from one part to another of that hive of many activities, you may happen to go into an upper lecture-hall, and note across the end of the platform a great curtain hanging. It is drawn reverently aside, and behind it one sees a fresco of the form of Christ, with hand uplifted pointing the way above. It is surely deeply significant of the vital power of His message, and of the way He wins men still to follow Him, that thoughtful people who have revolted from the economic system of what is called a Christian State, and from the superstition and lack of freedom which they associate with religion, turn in spite of all to Him as to a leader, thinking of Him as Jesus Christ, the first Socialist. In spite of the Church His spirit draws men; the Church cannot fail to draw them too, if instead of seeking honour as His representative, she seeks to show herself such by living for the service of humanity, seeking no other reward than still to serve.

## XI

### By the Hon. the Rev. J. G. ADDERLEY

How far is the working man affected by the High Church movement? By the "High Church movement" I mean that movement which had its origin in the *Tracts for the Times*, and which has developed in various directions until it may now be said to be represented by the "Ritualists" and the "Christian Socialists," though these two titles do not by any means describe exhaustively the total result.

Roughly speaking, the "High Church Party," or the "Anglo-Catholics" as they are sometimes called, stand for these principles:—

1. That the Church is a visible society with a threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons.

2. That the Church of England is the representative of that society in this country.

3. That the sacramental system is of Divine

ordinance, and therefore part of the "plan" of God for saving the human race.

4. That there is a definite body of doctrine, a deposit of faith, to be handed on and taught to all men in all ages.

5. That this faith is to be expressed in outward acts of worship by the whole congregation of faithful people.

6. That the Church of England has a right to use the traditional forms of worship which are common to the Christian Church, in accordance with the special rules laid down in its Book of Common Prayer.

These principles have been assiduously taught and realised in action by a very large number of persons in the Church of England during the past seventy years.

The question before us is this: Have the "working classes" been to any large extent influenced by them? Are many working men, so far as they are becoming Christian, becoming also "High Church"? Is the High Church movement making progress amongst them? Presuming that the movement is on right lines, can we say that it is adding to the progress of Christianity in England? If not, why not?

I desire to approach these questions in an uncontroversial spirit, and writing as a High Churchman I wish at the outset to express my firm belief that "Evangelicals," "Broad Churchmen," and Nonconformists are each of them influencing the thought of Englishmen in most important directions, and most certainly doing great good both by correcting the mistakes of High Churchmen and by reaching many persons to whom we cannot appeal with much prospect of success. I begin with adopting a distinction drawn, I think, by Charles Booth in his interesting volume on the Religion of London, between "attraction" and "attachment."

Many working men are attracted to religious bodies but not attached to them. They are attracted by a good preacher, a good man, a musical service, an open-air service. It does not at all follow that they are attached to the religious body which provides the attraction. Booth makes a remarkable observation in one of his books, that they are more "attached" where dogmatic religion is taught. The Roman Catholics, the old-fashioned Baptists, and the High Anglicans, who all three believe in dog-

matic religion, are most successful in attaching members.

The *Daily News* census leads us to believe that good preaching draws the greatest crowd. But this does not at all mean that the greatest attachment is to be found where the best preaching is heard. In the limits of this short article I must confine myself to the question of attachment. It comes to this, then, Are the working classes becoming attached to the High Church churches?

Now I believe that in the old "ritualistic" days, when men like Mr. Tooth and Mr. Enraght were being sent to prison for resistance to the Privy Council judgments, men were attracted in larger numbers to the High Church party than they are now. The "Church of England Working Men's Society" flourished in those days. It is now not much of a power in the Church. But this was probably owing to the fighting instincts of Englishmen. Men did not like seeing good priests sent to gaol. This is the strength of the Passive Resistance movement at the present day. But just as the popularity of the Nonconformist passive resister does not really mean that men are becoming

Baptists and Congregationalists in large numbers, so the popularity of the older "Ritualists" did not mean that men were becoming convinced of the truth of the principles of the *Tracts for the Times.*

There is a larger question. Are the working classes attached to anything? Dr. Chandler, the late Rector of Poplar, was convinced that indifference to religion was only part of a general indifference to everything serious. And religion, especially dogmatic religion, is a very serious matter indeed. "Undenominationalism" is the most popular form of religion just because it is the least serious. A religion of preaching is less serious than a religion of sacraments. It is comparatively easy to sit under a popular preacher, especially if the preacher cannot get at you on week-days and try to persuade you to carry out what he preaches.

The High Church clergy are no doubt not careful enough about preaching. But they make up for it by their teaching and by their classes, their confessions and their guilds. The working man if he is to attach himself to their churches finds that it means answering to a great practical demand which he is not at all prepared to do.

It has been said with great truth that even the religious working man has little or no idea of penitence, and it is just penitence which the High Church system insists on. The much-abused "Confessional" is, after all, a demand for heart-searching, self-examination, and amendment of life. And this, not by way of firework exhortations in the pulpit, which need not be attended to, but by a very severe system which none but one who is in earnest about his soul will be likely to adopt.

Again, it has been said that the working man with all his enthusiasm for "Social Reform" has never yet come to see to any extent that it can only be brought about by the regeneration of human nature.

Now the whole sacramental system presupposes faith in the necessity of a change, and the introduction of a new principle of life into fallen nature. This is the doctrine of grace. The working man does not understand this, and he shies at the High Church offer.

It is true that this is also partly because he does not comprehend the jargon of High Church theology. Quite three-quarters of the teaching of the High Church falls upon ears

that cannot, rather than ears that will not hear. The same might be said not only of working men but of dukes and duchesses, only we are not concerned with such exalted personages in this article.

It must be confessed that the High Church movement has been too much in the hands of clerics and theologians. They have arrived at a point where they are isolated, the bulk of the laity being far behind. And they have got to this point not by "Romanising," as some think, but merely by a logical carrying out of the Book of Common Prayer. Our services are intended for persons who are in a high state of Christian knowledge and experience, to which the majority of our congregations have not attained. The High Church clergy (such as Robert Dolling) have tried to remedy this by substituting the Holy Eucharist for Matins as the principal service on Sunday. They feel that the Eucharist, especially if rendered in an attractive way, is more intelligible than anything else in the Prayer Book for simple folk. The Eucharist, they tell us, is a plain, straightforward action, the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ, which all can see and realise.

The failure then, if failure there be, is more because of ignorance than anything more culpable. The remedy seems to lie in two directions. The children must be taught from the very beginning what we mean by our service; and, secondly, it must be shown that what we do in church is intimately connected with our ordinary every-day human life.

First, then, the children must be taught. It is probable that the days of Church day-schools are numbered. Children must be taught the Church religion in other ways. The priests, and any lay teachers they can gather round them, must organise "Catechism" on Sundays, holy days, and at other times. The modern Sunday School though excellent as a social institution is lamentably weak as a teaching force. It must give way to something more scientific, such as the St. Sulpice method offers.

My experience in Ten Days' Missions leads me to believe that children could be gathered together on week days out of school hours more easily than the defenders of voluntary schools seem willing to believe. They could then be taught in a simple, attractive way the elements of doctrine and worship. They should be shown

what everything in the Church means. They should be led to love everything that has to do with Christ, the Bible, the Ministry, the Sacraments. They should be encouraged as early as possible to take part in Church services and Church work. Then, both for them and for the grown-up people, it should be made clear not only by word but by deed that religion is not apart from life, but that for Christians it is life itself. Sundays should be made into happy days of Christian worship and Christian intercourse. The Church should mean to all a society of human beings living the very best human social life possible to be found on earth. Within the circle of each congregation there should be the means of realising a social life of the highest type, whether in art, or literature, or learning, or games. It should be felt that the human best is the Christlike; that the Word has indeed become flesh; that the things of flesh are meant to be Divine; that heaven is on earth; that the tabernacle of God is among men.

Now, unfortunately, our worship seems to many remote from life. Men ought indeed to feel that in church they are away from the

wicked world, but not that they are away from what is human.

It is at this point that we see how the Christian Social movement is the legitimate outcome of the Tractarian.

We are learning that the creeds and sacraments have been rescued from oblivion not that they may be looked upon as interesting discoveries to be deposited in a museum, but that they may be used and realised for twentieth century human progress.

It is significant that the first modern Socialist Society in England was a "ritualistic" one, the Guild of St. Matthew. The Guild has always put prominently forward the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion as the basis of a true social life. It has taken Baptism very seriously, and treated the bulk of the working classes as having been admitted while infants into the great democratic society of the Catholic Church. It has exalted the Eucharist as the great protest against luxury, snobbery, and competition, the demons which have made havoc of society.

The Christian Social Union following in its wake has permeated the Church of England with

its principles, echoing the old cry of Maurice and Kingsley, that we must protest against un-Christian socialists and unsocial Christians.

If our "High Churches" can only be set free from peddling controversies about candles and vestments, they will more and more become centres of Christian social life for ordinary men and women, irrespective of class. The High Church clergy are becoming more and more human, and as they advance in this direction the common people will hear them gladly. It is an extraordinary mistake which the extreme Protestant party make in supposing that the working classes are as a whole alarmed by what they suppose is "Romanism." One often wishes they were. High Churchmen were more "popular," in the best sense of the word, in the days when Sisters of Mercy had their veils torn off by an infuriated mob than they are in these days when Roman Catholics can have a Corpus Christi procession in the street and nobody seems to care. Most people do not mind enough to protest. But a great many also when they come in contact with the High Church discover that much that they have been told is untrue. They find that the High Church clergy read their

Bibles more than most "Bible-loving Englishmen," and that a large part of the best modern study of the Scriptures is carried on by men who, they have been told, "never read the Bible." They find that the High Church clergy believe in "Conversion," and preach quite as "Evangelical" sermons as they have ever heard in a chapel. They even find that the two great bugbears of "the Mass" and "the Confessional" are very harmless when rightly understood. It is the experience of most Missioners that people who have been brought up in "Evangelical" ways generally take the most readily to the great Gospel service of the "Mass" and to Confession.

The truth is, that when a man, be he duke or dustman, comes to believe in the simple doctrine of the Church Catechism, that the two great Sacraments are "generally necessary to salvation," or that he may, if he chooses, open his grief to a priest and receive the "benefit of absolution," he naturally gravitates towards the High Churchmen, who, as the great dissenter Dr. Dale used to say, seem to believe in their own formularies more than other parties in the Church of England do.

There is also greater adaptability among the

High Church than among the Low or the Broad. The Low Church are always on the look-out for a Roman rat, and forget how to pursue their own line of thought quietly and consistently. The Broad Church are continually criticising, and that is death to progress in the way of faith. It is like trying to love your father, and continually worrying yourself as to whether he has got his marriage lines in his desk, or whether he would not be more handsome if he had red hair. All that is best in every school of thought the High Church have made their own. They are thoroughly Evangelical, if that means that they are believers in the whole Gospel of God and want to carry it out to the full. At the same time they are not bound by Calvinistic or Methodistical shibboleths. They are more virile and, as I have said, "human" than the ordinary undenominational preachers.

An open-air service conducted by a manly, intelligent High Churchman, who knows what he believes, is much more attractive to the working man than the simpering affair which so often does duty for a service in the streets. The High Church hymns are more acceptable to

manly men than the music-hall ditties set to washy words by many so-called revivalists.

Again, the High Churchman is not so "critical" as the Broad Churchman. He does not worry himself unduly about the opinions of Dutch students, while at the same time he is not by any means a blind verbal inspirationist. He is content to accept the Creed at the hands of his mother the Church and to preach it to others. What was good enough for the martyrs is good enough for him. It produced successful clergymen and congregations in the Middle Ages, it can do so again. He prefers to be "wrong" with St. Francis of Assisi rather than to be "right" with Professor Schmuddel. Above all, he believes no creed which cannot be carried out in external worship and everyday life.

Let me conclude by describing an ideal High Church parish in a working-class district which ought, I think, to meet the needs of an average working man who wants to be a Christian.

The Vicar is an out-and-out "Catholic." He believes that he and his six curates are Catholic priests, placed at St. Botolph's with authority from Jesus Christ to bring the souls, that is, the lives, of every one in the parish into direct con-

tact with a living Master, at once their God and their Elder Brother. They believe that in the New Testament they have the living story of the Incarnation of God, the Word made flesh. In the companionship of Jesus and His disciples they see the beginning of the great Catholic Church to which they still belong. They believe that God did really come into touch with men, and revealed to them how all men ought to live. They realise the dangers of a narrow ecclesiasticism as related in the stories of the conflicts between the Pharisees and Sadducees and our Lord. They are therefore on their guard against being mere preachers, or theologians, or sacrament-mongers. They desire to bring men to God and not to themselves. Nevertheless they believe that in spite of all the failure of the Jewish Church, our Lord undoubtedly founded a new one to endure for ever.

They note that the Saviour's work was to deliver men from their sins and to set them free to live a new life here on earth in Himself. They believe that that work is still going on, and that the Holy Spirit is at work in the Church to do it. They believe that the death of Christ, followed by His triumphant resurrection and ascension,

was the great epoch-making event in the spiritual history of mankind. Through this victorious Christ, still living and active and present in the spiritual sphere, they believe that men can be brought back to God, their lives delivered and made whole and wholesome. They also note that in the Acts of the Apostles, in the story of the beginnings of the Church, are the germs of all that they still hold to be essential for the saving of mankind. They read of a visible Church, a society of men and women, of admission to it by baptism, of a gospel of repentance and remission of sins, of confirmation by the laying on of the hands of bishops, of the Holy Communion, of Sunday observance, of fasting, of almsgiving, of public prayers, of a threefold ministry of apostles, elders, and deacons, of a happy social life of unity and good works. This is to them the Catholic system, this is the sacred apparatus of Christianity which they feel themselves called upon as priests to set going and to maintain in full vigour, in the midst of a twentieth century town district.

Now notice how they do it.

First let us describe the Sunday at St. Botolph's. It begins with five celebrations of

the Holy Communion. The Christians of the district begin by getting "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." They come together for the breaking of the bread. They greet the Lord in the early morning, the morning of His own day. They fervently believe that under the veil of the sacred symbols of bread and wine there is His assured Presence. He has pledged Himself to be in their midst in a special way. He graces His own meal. As truly as those first disciples gathered round the Master on the first Maundy-Thursday evening, so now they gather round Him in His dear feast. Jesus is here. They are sure of it. In the midst of a hard, monotonous life there is a blessed half-hour of communion with a Master who never treats them hardly, or sweats or bullies them; a King who can never be a tyrant; a Brother whose love can never wax cold. He holds out to them what He calls, with His blessed lips that cannot lie, His "body" and His "blood." They eat and drink with Him. They feed upon His life, fresh and powerful and all-sustaining; they abide in Him and He in them. They go forth refreshed for the work of the week.

A little later on there is the "Children's

Eucharist." What does this mean? It means that those whom the Lord calls the "greatest in the kingdom of heaven" are allowed to assemble round the King's table. It means that the lambs of the flock are called to rejoice amidst the pastures of the Good Shepherd; that they are to be taught as soon as possible the glory of the great atoning sacrifice, by seeing before their eyes the "showing forth of the Lord's death" until He come. They are to be encouraged to worship God in His own appointed way.

Most of them are not yet confirmed, so they cannot receive the blessed gift itself, but they see others doing it in remembrance of Him, and they wistfully look forward to the day of their first Communion. But most of all they are being led to love their Saviour and His Church, His holy table and all that has to do with Him. One of the priests takes the opportunity to explain things to them and to show them what Christians mean by this service. Some of the little boys are allowed, like Samuel, to minister to the Lord, that is, they assist the priest in his holy work of celebrating the mysteries.

Then follows Matins, the beautiful office of Morning Prayer, when the Holy Scriptures are

read and psalms are sung—a very suitable devotion for the more spiritual among the communicants, who can enter into its meaning and understand the prayers, but a very unsuitable service for an unconverted crowd.

Then comes another celebration of the Lord's Supper, this time with great pomp and magnificence, and with a sermon.

This I must describe, because it is very popular with the working people of St. Botolph's. It is, in fact, the centre round which all else revolves.

To-day is a great festival. It is Whitsun Day, the birthday of the great democratic society to which they all belong, and which they rightly believe to be much more important than their Trades Union and even than the British Empire itself.

No wonder that they are a bit excited to-day.

"The Lord's Table looks grand to-day; fit for the King of Kings!" says Tom Jones the stevedore and churchwarden.

"Yes, indeed, Tom," replies the Duke of Seven Dials, a sidesman.

The altar is covered with a gorgeous red frontal, sparkling with jewels. It was worked by the women of St. Botolph's, the Duchess of

Seven Dials supplying the diamonds and topaz. Masses of red flowers and twinkling lights surround the sanctuary.

"Why is it all in red to-day?" asks the Duke.

"Don't you know?" says Tom. "Red's the colour for Whitsun Day, to remind us of the tongues of fire."

Fifty men and boys take part in the procession. Clouds of incense, symbolising the ascending merits of the Lamb, rise, and banners of all the Parish Guilds are carried: the Guild of St. Joseph the Carpenter for the men; the Guild of Our Lady the Mother for women; the Guild of St. Agnes the Virgin for girls; the Guild of the Holy Child of Nazareth for the boys.

The priests, in obedience to the Book of Common Prayer, are robed in vestments of red silk. The Church is crowded. There are always more men at this service than at any other. Here we see most of those who made their communions early. They have come to renew their thanksgiving for the priceless gift of the blessed sacrament, and to praise God for the sacrifice of His Son, and the outpouring of

the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Here, too, are to be seen the latest converts who have come to adore the Lamb of God, in whom they are now trusting for salvation. The principle of this grand service is found by the priests in Article XXXI. of the Church of England. This true "mass" is very far from being a "blasphemous fable or a dangerous deceit." It is the great pleading of the "offering of Christ once made."

An excellent sermon is preached by one of the clergy on the "Fruit of the Spirit," and the service proceeds to its culminating point, the Consecration Prayer. Then amid solemn silence, every knee in the church bended, every head bowed low, there is once more pleaded before the eternal Father the all-sufficient sacrifice of Calvary, and one and all the congregation renew their faith in Him who died for them. The Eucharist is the central act of the people of St. Botolph's. All unite in this common action. The poor gather round the table to seek comfort in their troubles from the sacred heart of Jesus manifested before them in the sacrament of His love; the rich bend in humility before the Lord of lords;

the Socialists, who always come in large numbers on their way to the Labour meeting, gain fresh enthusiasm for their work as they see before them the witness of the power of grace, the sacred humanity of real flesh and blood, greatest when offered in sacrifice for its fellows, not ashamed to call them brethren. They feel that Christ is giving them a lead, the Captain of Salvation, pointing them to God yet mingling with man in the simple feast of bread and wine, joining heaven and earth in one great brotherhood.

There is an atmosphere of early Christianity about the Lord's Supper as administered at St. Botolph's. All are of one heart and soul; all are sharing the good things of God; class distinctions are broken down; times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.

Dinner at the Clergy House is the next item on the programme. Here are to be seen soldiers and sailors, tramps, thieves, priests, occasionally a bishop, officers, members of Parliament, peers,—any one who happens to look in on this the happiest day of the week.

In the afternoon there is much to do. There is the "Catechism." This means a

scientific, well-ordered instruction of the children in the rudiments of the religion of Christ, on the plan borrowed from the saintly Bishop Dupanloup and the clergy of St. Sulpice. The children take a lively interest in the lesson, and it is evident that they are gathering in a store of knowledge for days to come. On this particular day there is an animated dialogue on the subject of the "Church."

The priests of St. Botolph's must be excused on Whitsun Day for being particularly "churchy," though for them and their people there is no antagonism between Christ and His Church. To preach one is to preach the other. It is therefore the subject also of the "Lecture for Men only" which the Vicar delivers to an audience of a thousand in the large hall in the afternoon. After the lecture there is a vigorous discussion. Some of the Socialists who still remain unconverted (though there are very few such in St. Botolph's parish) make an attempt to show that the Church is behind the times. But most of them have come to see that the Church is the greatest reforming agency the world has ever known. By the Church they mean not the clergy only, but the whole body

of the baptized. A few jokes are bandied about the Archbishop's income, but on the whole there is unanimity and an honest desire to join together for the good of the brotherhood.

After the lecture, the Relief Committee meets. This is a committee of men and women communicants presided over by a deacon. They look into each case of poverty or sickness that has been brought to the notice of the clergy during the week, and help is given to the needy out of the offertory fund.

I have no space to describe the administration of Holy Baptism, though that too is an imposing function. The ritual is designed to show that the sacrament of christening is a very real transaction, by which each little child is claimed by Christ and incorporated into the great Society. Nor can I do justice to the social side of Sunday at St. Botolph's. It is a real holiday. Instead of every one looking miserable, and wondering what he must not do because it is the Lord's Day, he has discovered what he must do first because he is a Christian, and he does it very well.

Evensong is a grand service. Like Matins it is kept chiefly for the converted, who can

enter into its meaning. The children are again catechised after the second lesson, and there is a joyful procession and a short address.

After Evensong comes the great Mission Service. For an hour before it the Communicants' Guild have been parading the streets with their band, preaching at street corners, and "button-holing" people at the doorsteps, telling them about Church. The service is of a free and easy character, but with a due regard to the dignity of worship. A choir of two hundred voices sing the hymns. The Lessons are read clearly and explained. There is a short instruction and a sermon. Opportunities are given for inquiry and for meeting the clergy. A great many confirmations, first confessions, and reclamations of lapsed communicants date from these inquiries.

And now for the week-days at St. Botolph's. I cannot give a day-by-day description, but I will give a list of some of the work got through week after week by the clergy and large staff of lay-workers.

I have already mentioned the Relief Committee which sits on Sundays. In connection with this there is much visiting done, and the

Committee is in touch with various organisations —the Guardians of the Poor, the Trades Unions and Friendly Societies, etc. One of the clergy is a Guardian, another is a Borough Councillor, another is on the Management of the Council Schools. There is no social movement in the neighbourhood with which one or more of the Church workers is not connected. There are communicants' clubs, where night by night the Church folk meet for recreation and mutual improvement. Non-communicants are admitted, but it is generally recognised that the social life of the clubs is primarily Christian.

To put it briefly, the Church at St. Botolph's is not a timid society, apologising for its own existence, and asking people to join it, but it is the predominant association of the neighbourhood, the only thoroughly well-organised and efficient society to be found. It is a "city set on an hill" that cannot be hid. The people outside feel instinctively that the best form of life, whether in education, recreation, politics, or worship, is to be found within the circle of St. Botolph's congregation.

It is felt that so far from their religion being an adjunct to life, it is the life itself. They

crowd the church for worship, they flock to the confessionals—the sinners to realise pardon through Christ, the ordinary faithful people to obtain advice or spiritual refreshment. They smile a smile of pity when the Protestant Van comes round to tell them they are priest-ridden fools who know nothing of salvation, or that the clergy are keeping them from Christ, or that the Vicar is an idolater, or that he does not believe in the sacrifice of Calvary. They know what they believe and what they worship. The clergy are their guides, their friends, their brothers, their ministers, their parsons, in the true sense of those words. "Priestcraft" is indeed rampant, if by that is meant that the ministers know their "craft" or trade, and ply it most efficiently.

It is remarkable how St. Botolph's by its wide human interest has attached to itself men and women of all classes and tastes. The scientific man does not stand aloof, not so much because he finds that the clergy know something about biology and astronomy, but because he finds that they conduct their business on scientific lines. They give their flock what has been called "a scientific presentment

of religion." The artist finds that the Church at St. Botolph's uses his art by enabling him to ply it in the decoration of the House of God with what is really beautiful and tasteful. The workman comes forward to give his labour to the Church because he finds it is respected. Fair wages are paid for work done, and good work is encouraged. The social reformer finds that his work is not looked upon at St. Botolph's as something outside religion, but that no religion is known or understood there which has not for its outcome the reformation of human society in its highest sense. Politics are dealt with apart from partisanship, and are sanctified by being handled as part of the carrying out of the will of Christ, the great Social Reformer, who acts upon the consciences and wills of men to make society more godly in everyday life.

The athlete finds himself in an atmosphere of ennobling influence. His recreations are for the fitting of his body for better work for God and man. He has no desire to bet or gamble, for his games are meant for a higher purpose, and would be disgraced by such sordid and stupid practices in connection with them. Even

the actor, so often despised by religious people, is welcomed at St. Botolph's, and learns to exercise his art to the glory of God.

St. Botolph's is a home of hope and love. Humanity can live and breathe there. The "world" is overcome. The Devil retires discomfited. Man finds himself religious and yet still a man, nay more, a truer man than ever. Christ is revealed as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Church is found to be the "Body of Christ."

I have written the above to show what I think the High Church movement might do, and what the working men might find in it if we all understood one another better.

I conclude with a few opinions from representative High Churchmen, which speak for themselves. They were written in reply to my question: "Are the working men influenced by the High Church movement, especially in regard to 'the Mass,' 'the Confessional,' and 'Ritual'?"

The Rev. A. H. STANTON, St. Alban's, Holborn.

Speaking generally, I don't think the working man troubles himself about High Church

or any other religion. Certainly not about Ritual. As for Confession and the Mass, he knows quite enough to know that all the authorities in the Establishment run them both down, and he is not likely to take to either unless he has a love of the Catholic religion, which a few have, but only a very small percentage.

Of course in the case of parishes where the parson is for many reasons a *persona grata*, he may take to both, but the attachment is purely personal.

### The Rev. J. S. Burn, All Saints, Middlesborough

Our experience is that only the poor take any notice of the Gospel. The well-to-do, be they workmen or masters, want little with God or His gospel. Our congregation is entirely working class. We have nothing but workmen and wives and children.

All our people go to confession, and I always have much less trouble with men's confessions than with women's and girl's. I consider that no real spiritual work can be done amongst the people without confession.

The Mass is the central point in our parish round which all revolves.

Our people are not ritualists, and, I think, are hardly conscious of being what they are called by outsiders.

The late Rev. W. H. JERVOIS,
St. Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, W.

I believe the genuine working man is influenced by the High Church movement in so far as it is presented to him by men he can trust and respect, men of sincerity, and above all by men who will treat him as a *brother*, and show by their lives that they feel they *are* brothers.

Ceremonial, *per se*, does not, I think, attract the genuine working man, nor does even the exhibition of the Mass as *the* worship of the Christian Church, nor the faithful teaching of Confession. All the influence which these things have on the working man depend in our modern England, on the priest who presents them, and the way in which he does so.

Mr. H. Algernon Colvile,
Evangelist Brotherhood, Wolverhampton

I don't think that the genuine working men are at all largely influenced by the Church. They look upon her as a big conservative club, a class institution which is utterly opposed to the rights of Labour, caring nothing for their interests in this world. Where they are at all influenced, it is by the thoroughly evangelical High Church priest with strong socialistic tendencies, and where there is good straight preaching.

I think the Holy Communion with simple but truly impressive ritual is, above every other, the service that the working man (when once converted) can and does enter into.

The Rev. H. Ross, St. Michael's, Shoreditch

If you mean the sort of religion some of the dignitaries of the Church would desire to press upon us, then I say most certainly it is a dismal failure as far as the ordinary working man is concerned, for he wouldn't turn his head to glance at it. "Church of Englandism" as

such does not touch one working man in a thousand, and no wonder.

But what does and will influence the genuine working man is the Catholic Faith and Catholic Sacraments taught and practised in a perfectly open, straight-from-the-shoulder manner by a priest who deals with men as men, and shows a little sympathetic common-sense interest in anything that affects the life of the working man.

It does and must depend a great deal upon individualism, and that is a most important factor in the work which our part of the Church is slow to recognise and still more clumsy to use.

I think our greatest difficulty is the utter indifference to all religion which has resulted from latter-day methods of education and the rush and turmoil of modern life.

The ordinary working man seems to have lost all idea of the obligation of worship and duty from the creature to the Creator, and until we can get back that idea of duty and obligation toward God, I do not believe the working man will find religion nor religion find him.

I am sure no party in the Church is doing much more than touching the fringe of the masses of our working people. And here is the real "crisis," parishes containing thousands who never darken the doors of any place of worship of any description.

I must add, from practical experience, that more working men die in the faith and fear of our blessed Lord than the world or their comrades imagine, and this is a ray of glorious hope and encouragement.

Rev. WALTER J. CAREY, Ascension, Lavender Hill

1. The artisan seems to me the hardest class of all to touch. He has not the Bohemianism of the classes below him, and owing to his long hours affords little chance of being "got at" in the evenings.

He is influenced probably just as much, no more or less, as any other class, and when converted to the Catholic Faith shows a very fine type of character—resolute, independent, thorough-going, and keen.

When they become Catholics they become

very thorough, and combine with facility that evangelical love of the Saviour with the regular use of the Sacraments, as covenanted and normal means of grace.

I should say that the genuine working man is not affected by the Catholic movement in larger numbers than any other class, but I think that if his own class is regarded by itself he is much more moved by it than by any other form of religion, *e.g.* Father Dolling would be far better known and appreciated among our artisans than say Spurgeon.

Indifference to all religion keeps them from church. It is not the Mass or the Confessional.

We can reckon in our own church an average Sunday men's attendance at Mass of about 300 (at all services combined), and of these probably one-third are artisans, the rest being clerks, etc. It is not ideal, but better than many morning congregations.

2. As regards (1) Confession; (2) Mass; (3) Ritual.

To my mind there is no difficulty in any of these. Conversion is the difficulty. When I take Confirmation classes of men I work for conversion all the time. Confession comes

absolutely naturally and without pressure, and artisans are the easiest of all—far easier than clerks, for instance, for they are more simple.

I find that if they are puzzled about ritual they ask the rationale, but it presents no difficulty. It seems fitting to them that the Church should have one great service of worship, and fitting also that it should be magnificent. Give me twelve converted men, I would always undertake to bring them to confession, without pressure, after twelve classes.

Why we Catholics don't sweep the board is partly no doubt our own sinfulness and sloth, but mainly, I think, the absence of system. We have no system behind us.

We feel that the bishops regard us as more or less estimable free lances, but they don't intend to work their dioceses on Catholic lines. Therefore we are left without official backing.

I firmly believe that (1) given Catholic bishops; (2) given Catholic parish priests, all teaching the same—one revealed, objective Catholic faith—we should sweep into the Church of England, as the local part of the Catholic Church, all the true religion that is in England. And if in the process we shed

respectable Establishment kind of religion, then Laus Deo.

Rev. W. B. TREVELYAN, St. Matthew's, Westminster

I feel sure that "High Church" teaching does appeal to the working man. But it needs slow, patient, individual work. *Prejudices* go deep. He always hears objections. His mind is full of rubbish. There is much practical *Materialism* which leads to (*a*) indifference about religion in general; (*b*) failure to grasp in the least the nature of anything sacramental or mystical. The supernatural needs to be rediscovered.

The working man's head must be appealed to as well as his heart, but we must not be too anxious to be intellectual. I think it is very possible to treat him too much as if he were rather different from ordinary human beings. "Men's Services" may easily be overdone.

Those who teach him must not be afraid to *make demands*, to show him the need of self-sacrifice, etc. He cannot and does not respect the modern "go-as-you-please" religion.

As to confession, the majority of men who accept the teaching will (so far as my experience goes) make at least first confession. Some will go on habitually and regularly, but by no means to the same extent as women. A certain number will come two or three times a year.

Regarding the Mass, it takes time to teach the working man the *obligation* of worship. But he can certainly be won to value the Mass. The right kind of service, attractive, easy to follow, easy to join in, is, I think, a desideratum.

As to ritual, I think working men value a dignified ceremonial as much as any one else. It makes a great difference when they realise that these things belong to us and are not alien or continental. We do not teach enough history. I suppose that in many places an elaborate ceremonial appeals to them, but of that I have had no chance of judging. What is quiet, devoid of fuss, intelligible, and as far as possible invariable, is what they seem to like best.

*Printed by* R. & R. Clark, Limited, *Edinburgh.*